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VOL. I.

LONDON:

THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1852.

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THE FARCE OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Love thy mother, little one !
Kiss and clasp her neck again,—
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.

Love thy mother, little one !
Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee.

Hood.

It was a cold, damp evening in December ;
and a small rain having fallen without intermission the whole day, the streets of London were covered with a thick, black

mud, from which the light of the gas lamps was reflected in mournful rays.

Even in populous, busy London, there is something inexpressibly desolate in such an evening. To the thin-shod, houseless, half-famished wanderer, it is fraught with fever and with death ; and the delicate lady of fashion seems to recoil from touching the ground, as she springs from her carriage to the open hall-door, where obsequious lacqueys are awaiting to usher her to the halls of luxury.

Few foot passengers were abroad in the streets at the west end of the town, and the silence was only occasionally broken by the rumbling of a cab, with a wet driver in a shining hat, and a still wetter horse plodding on with bent down head, and a dripping halter on its neck ; or by the heavy roll of an omnibus filled almost to suffocation.

It was about six o'clock, when one of these vehicles stopped at the corner of a

street crossing Portland Place ; and a woman, dressed in deep mourning, and carrying a child in her arms, stepped out and paid her fare in silence.

“ All right,” cried the conductor, and the carriage rolled away, whilst the lady, for such she was, remained standing, and looked anxiously around her, as if bewildered by the strangeness of her position, and uncertain which way to proceed. But she did not long hesitate. She wrapped her shawl closer round her sleeping infant, and walked up to the door of the house nearest to her, to ascertain the number. It was not that she sought, but it served her as a guide, and she then proceeded quickly, for some distance, down the street.

A bright light was streaming from the drawing-room windows, and music sounded gaily from the mansion, where she at length paused, and, though with a trembling hand, gave a double knock. The door was almost immediately afterwards

flung open by a smart footman in livery, who evidently expected a very different guest, and gazed for a moment with consternation and surprise on the figure before him.

“Show me to Mr. Elsmere,” said the lady, taking advantage of the man’s confusion, and advancing several steps into the well-lighted passage.

“It is quite impossible,” answered the footman, holding the door in his hand. “My master is just going to dinner, and there is a large party expected.”

“I must see him,” was the reply; and it was spoken with such a quiet firmness that the domestic looked again at the intruder from head to foot; and this time, came to the conclusion that she was no common beggar.

“Who shall I say has enquired for him?” he demanded in a civiler tone of voice, as he closed the front door, and came close up to her.

“Give him that card, and say I shall not

detain him long," she returned ; and she put a card, with a name written on it, into his hand.

Whilst the footman stood reading it in the lamp-light, the door of a back dining-room opened, and a tall, handsome man about five and thirty, in full dress, came out.

"With whom are you talking there, James, at this unseasonable hour?" he said, casting an angry glance at the stranger. "Such people ought to go to the other door when company is expected."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but this person is no acquaintance of mine. She says she wishes to speak with you," was the servant's submissive reply.

"Yes, Mr. Elsmere, you must hear me at last, though it be only for five minutes," said the stranger, in a feeble but decided tone, as she advanced close to the master of the house.

Mr. Elsmere looked at her with an in-

quisitive and searching gaze, till suddenly an expression of the most withering and insulting contempt distorted his handsome features.

The lady did not shrink beneath it, but she felt that she was recognized, and she was not surprised when Mr. Elsmere sternly demanded, by what right she had presumed to intrude into his house.

“ In right of your brother’s child,” she calmly, and distinctly replied. “ In right of his last dying petition, that you would extend your regard and protection to his orphan, and his—”

“ This audacity is not to be borne ; and in the presence of servants too,” said the gentleman. “ Have you no sense of decency, or delicacy. I am engaged, I expect company, and your visit is an annoyance beyond measure at such an hour.”

“ I have travelled from Clifton to-day,” was the soft reply, “ and as, perhaps, it may be the last opportunity I may ever have of seeing you, I wished to recommend

my boy to your protection, which I trusted your sense of justice alone would have sufficed to secure for him."

A carriage at this moment drew up before the hall door, and a thundering knock quickly echoed through the house.

"Come into this room, till my visitors have passed, madam, and then I request that you leave my house, at once and for ever," said Mr. Elsmere, sternly; and as he spoke, he re-opened the door from whence he had issued, and followed the lady, who silently obeyed him, into a back parlour.

Almost immediately afterwards, three elegant and fashionable women glided, in full dress, up the softly carpetted stairs, in the pleasing flutter of conscious beauty and expected triumph.

The poor lady in the back parlour, unbidden took a chair before a glowing fire, and held up her infant's chubby feet to its warmth.

"Mr. Elsmere," she said, bursting into tears after the gentleman had walked once

or twice, with hurried steps, in angry silence up and down the room, “you promised poor Edward, when he was dying, you would be a brother to me, and a father to his child.”

“Yes, madam,” he replied, stopping suddenly before her, and regarding her with cold, stern disdain; “but I was then in ignorance of the truth; circumstances have changed; and after all that has come to light since my brother’s death, I wonder at your audacity in intruding on me in this manner.”

“It is the last time I shall trouble you,” she said, calmly; “but I do not deserve such treatment, Mr. Elsmere, and whatever you may assert, you are well aware, that I do not—you degrade yourself and not me, by conduct so unworthy of a gentleman and a Christian. You have made me shed bitter tears, very bitter tears; but I could have pardoned all, had your treatment of me not been an insult to the memory of him, whom I loved and honoured.”

“ You have no cause to complain of my treatment, madam,” was the quiet reply. “ I have provided for your wants, and those of your child, and certainly you must admit, that in your position, you had no right to expect so much from me. If your object in coming hither be to obtain money, here are twenty pounds at your service, on condition that for the future I am troubled by no further applications of the kind.”

“ My object is not to obtain money,” said the lady, arising without casting a look on the bank notes Mr. Elsmere held towards her ; “ money, however much you may value it, cannot heal such wounds as are bleeding in my heart.”

At this moment the door was thrown open, and a girl, about ten years old, sprang gaily into the room. She was pale and sickly ; but most elegantly dressed in pink silk, whilst a profusion of well ordered flaxen ringlets fell around her neck and shoulders.

“ Papa—papa,” she cried, and then,

perceiving that Mr. Elsmere was not alone, she stopped short, and gazed with curiosity, for a moment, at the lady and her child, before she glided softly up to her father, and, taking his hand, said in a low voice, "Mamma sent me to say, you must come to dinner. Everybody has arrived, and they are all waiting for you."

"Go, Mr. Elsmere, I will no longer detain you," said the lady, arising as she spoke. "Go to your company; and may no remembrance of the desolate woman, and the orphan nephew, you now turn from your door, ever intrude upon your memory, to dim the brightness of your revels. May God accomplish your dearest wishes, as you have fulfilled your promises to your dying brother. Providence may one day bring this hour bitterly to your remembrance."

"Papa, who is that lady?" demanded the little girl, who had listened, with wonder and anxious curiosity, to this passionate appeal.

Mr. Elsmere made no reply. In spite of his assumed tranquillity, many conflicting feelings agitated his breast, and something, almost amounting to remorse, stung his heart, as he contemplated the calm, elevated, and unearthly beauty of his visitor, who, with her babe folded in her arms, stood erect in the middle of the room; the light of a pendant lamp falling full upon her sorrowful countenance. Her widow's mourning could not conceal the perfection of her figure, nor the dazzling fairness of her complexion. A hectic colour glowed on her transparent cheeks, and gave an unnatural brightness to her large, soft, black eyes, where tears still glistened; and the expression of her countenance sufficed to prove, that the soul of this fair and graceful woman, was as beautiful and pure as the shrine it animated.

Mr. Elsmere knew her merits, and the injustice of her sufferings well, but it was contrary to his interest to acknowledge them, and he made no effort to detain her.

As soon as he heard the hall door closed after her, as she went out into the street, he took his little daughter by the hand, and telling her that the stranger was only a troublesome beggar, whom she was to say nothing more about, he proceeded to the drawing-room.

“But, Papa, the lady said the baby was your nephew! what could she mean by that?” enquired the girl, eagerly.

“She was mad, my dear; and the sooner you forget such nonsense, the better,” replied the gentleman; and with the blandest smiles, he then joined the large party assembled to celebrate the birth-day of his only son and heir.

But the little girl never forgot either the strange lady, or the words she had uttered. The language of the heart, so seldom heard in the polished monotony of fine society, makes an indelible impression on children, whenever it breaks, by accident, on their unaccustomed ears.

Three years afterwards, Mr. Elsmere lost, by a painful and lingering disease, the only male heir of his fortunes and his name; and his daughter then remembered, with a feeling of superstitious awe, the widow's parting malediction.

Other hours awaited her in life, when it was yet more forcibly to be brought back to her mind.

Whilst the splendid and vain hospitality, by which Mr. Elsmere sought the gratification of his vanity, was accepted without gratitude, as a thing of every-day occurrence, by the fashionable votaries of pleasure, who were his guests, the poor widow proceeded as fast as her almost exhausted strength enabled her, towards Oxford-Street.

She was fortunately not unacquainted with London, although it was the first time she had ever trodden its streets at such an hour, alone. But the partner of her life was in the grave, and the feeling

that it was her duty to supply his place, to the babe she carried in her arms, gave her renewed courage and resolution. She was a mother, and in that lay a power far beyond her mere bodily strength. All her hopes and wishes upon earth were centred in her infant. Happily he slept on, even in the noisy bustle of the busy streets, and it was not till the lady had again entered an omnibus, proceeding towards the city, that he awoke with a fretful cry for food. She soothed him as she best could, and when she quitted the vehicle in the neighbourhood of the Mansion House, he again slept soundly. Her feeble arms were now almost unable to sustain the burthen she carried ; and her limbs tottered, as she turned down a narrow street at the back of the Poultry.

She was here no longer certain of her way, and she stopped to ask an old apple woman, who sat at her poor fruit stall, with her feet in a sack, and a farthing candle burning in a paper screen before

her, if she could direct her to Rose Court. It was fortunately very near, and in less than five minutes the lady passed under a gateway into a silent, gloomy court, from whence there was no other opening. The houses around were quiet and respectable, but old and smoke-stained ; and many generations had passed away since they had been the dwellings of the wealthy merchants by whom they were built. They were now mostly offices and warehouses ; and as they were all closed for the night, the stillness and solitude, contrasted with the noise and bustle of the neighbouring streets, like the dead with the living.

A tall, dingy house, closed up the end of the narrow alley, and to this the lady at once proceeded. Her hand trembled as she raised the bright, brass knocker, and she remembered the reception she had so recently met with ; but here no dashing footman came to drive her from the door. Several minutes elapsed before an old wo-

man, with a tallow candle in her hand, slowly and cautiously lifted the latch.

“ Mary, is your master at home ?” inquired the wanderer, in a feeble voice.

“ Lord love you, ma’am, is that you ? It is so late we had quite given up expecting you !” was the joyful reply, by which she was welcomed, “ and carrying the babe, your own self ! Give the pretty dear to me, and come up stairs, ma’am, for master will be right glad to see you. But Lord love you, ma’am, how tired you look ! and no wonder, carrying this heavy boy, and you never used to the like.”

“ Who is it, Mary ? Is my sister come at last ?” was the demand hastily made by a male voice, at the door of a room on the first floor, to which they were ascending.

“ Yes sir, yes, Mrs. Elsmere is coming up, sir.”

“ My dearest sister, you are heartily welcome,” said a tall, thin man, in black, about forty years of age, who now advan-

ced, and after kissing the widow with fatherly affection, led her by the hand into the small room from whence he had come to receive her.

She did not speak, but she turned aside her head, to conceal the tears she shed. The furniture of the apartment they entered was old-fashioned, and by the tasteful and the luxurious, would have been called shabby, for taste begets many wants. But it was well preserved, scrupulously clean, and sufficed for the necessities of the proprietor of the dwelling. That evening, the red-stuff window curtains looked bright and comfortable in the light of the glowing fire, and the old china tea things, arranged on a mahogany table, were reflected from its polished surface. A kettle was singing on the fire, and a cat lay asleep on the rug.

The master of the house and his faithful servant had prepared everything with love and affection, for the reception of the poor widow.

The lady understood this, the moment she entered the room, and she turned to thank her brother, the Rev. Mr. Marston, with a look of unutterable gratitude ; she murmured a few broken words, and then, resting her head upon his shoulder, she wept convulsively.

“ Poor child! I thank God you are here at last,” said the clergyman kindly pressing her hand, “ but this must not be, I cannot bear to see you weep, my own Lucy !”

“ She is exhausted by her journey, sir, and wants rest and nourishment,” said old Mary, “ I will lay the child on the sofa, and get tea ready in a minute.”

This, she quickly performed, whilst Mr. Marston placed his sister in a large easy chair near the fire. Without checking her grief, he spoke so tenderly to her, that her first burst of sorrow was soothed, by degrees ; and she was, before long, able to answer his affectionate enquiries, and to thank him for his kindness.

Old Mary then removed her hat and shawl,

changed her wet shoes, and insisted on her drinking the tea she had prepared for her. This greatly revived her; but more than all, the consciousness that she was watched by loving eyes, and served by loving hands cheered her heart; for, once the object of the most ardent attachment and devotion, she had suffered the great trial of being left suddenly alone amongst strangers, to endure the most heart-rending grief without sympathy and without pity.

“ You got my letter, dearest brother,” said the lady as soon as the old servant had left them alone. “ I have nothing new to tell you, except that I went to Duchess Street, on my way hither, and was received most cruelly.”

“ Poor child! why did you venture to go there, after all that has passed?” enquired Mr. Marston.

“ I went for my boy’s sake, not my own,” she replied. “ I knew it was the last effort I could make in his behalf; but I went in vain. The rich have cast him off! You

only will protect him when I am in the grave."

"Talk not of death, Lucy" said the curate; "with God's blessing, you will be well and strong again before long. We must all have trials, and though you are afflicted now, you will have happy days again, when your boy will supply his father's place, and reward your anxious cares by his gratitude and love."

"I have known happy days," replied the widow, whilst tears filled her eyes. "I have known sunny days—days it is painful to think are for ever gone ! yet, oh God, they are past, and I am for ever alone, till I rejoin my own lost one in heaven. Indeed brother, death has no longer terrors for me!"

"You are not alone as long as you have his boy, Lucy," said the curate gently taking her hand.

"Better he had never been born, than live to be called the child of shame," she exclaimed, bursting into a passionate fit of weeping. "Oh brother! brother! what

would my poor husband have suffered on his death-bed, had he known that his cruel relatives would deny the right of his widow and his child to bear his name, and turn them with dishonour from their roof! A loss such as mine is hard to bear, but when shame and insult are added to it, the heart must break."

"The innocent should never despair of God's mercy," said Mr. Marston. "When the heart is pure, no matter what the world may say. Insult can not reach you under my roof, and my income is sufficient for our simple wants."

"But my boy—my poor boy! must he be for ever robbed of his birth-right?"

"The law must yet do him justice, if there be a possibility of producing the necessary evidence," said Mr. Marston, gently.

"The law is too dear for the widow and the orphan," was the bitter reply. "Neither you nor I have the means to undertake a law-suit, even though the wealthy and the

powerful rob us of thousands. The lawyer at Clifton laughed at me, when I talked of my son's rights, and said if I attempted to proceed farther by law, I should only bring myself to starvation and a prison."

"At the worst then, Lucy, we can bring your boy up to be an honest and industrious man," was the reply. "He will not be less happy, though he be compelled to earn his own living. You know, my child, I am a great advocate for the necessity of labour to secure happiness. I have worked hard enough myself."

"Yes, dearest brother, and very ill have your zealous toils been paid."

"That is true," answered the curate with a sigh. "A house in this dark alley, with eighty pounds a year, as curate to a large, poor parish, is a small requital for the costly studies of a school and a college—for the labours and the hopes of youth—above all, when a man has taken a double first, as I did. But then you know, Lucy," and he passed his hand over his brow to

conceal a blush. " You know I never was a flatterer. When I had pupils I made them work. I was no cringer to nobility. I was no worshipper of the rights of wealth, and so I had no patrons. If a man value his independence, and his christian principles, above all the prizes which the proud and powerful can offer, he must be content to remain a poor curate, in our aristocratical Episcopal Church, till the end of his days. I was too poor to marry.—I felt that bitterly once—but it is long ago—and now I am content—and I ought to be, for did not Christ come to preach against the princes of the church. Let us remember Him, Lucy, and do our duty meekly—our reward will come at last."

" God will bless you, my dear brother, for you have done much good, with your small means," answered the widow, kissing the curate's hand, with holy reverence ; " I can never be grateful enough for the unspeakable peace your kindness this night has brought to my harassed and troubled

heart. If affording consolation to the afflicted, can bestow joy, you must indeed be happy, even on earth."

"Yes, Lucy, I should be happy, if it were in my power to assist even a small portion of the suffering I see around me, in this great city," answered the curate ; "but the wretched are thronged together in such masses, that an individual is helpless to comfort, or to serve ; and the state of the poor is getting worse every day, though poor rates may have somewhat diminished. Charity, is almost powerless to aid or solace ; but I am glad you have come to help me, Lucy, for we must all do as much as we can for our fellow creatures, and I am sure you will feel your own sorrow lighter, when you can contribute to lessen the miseries of others."

"I know it by experience," answered the lady softly.

"Yet, my child, I often see things too frightful for you to witness. The soul is dragged down by the perdition of the body,

and want, when it does not kill, degrades most fearfully."

" Dear brother, you make me shudder," murmured the widow, gazing anxiously in her brother's face.

" Yet what I say is true. When I talk to my rector of the misery in his parish, and he is a rich Prebend, who has money enough for a fine house, and fine dinners, he laughs and calls me a visionary. The parish officers say I am a soft-hearted fool, ever ready to be imposed upon; but it is true, Lucy, nevertheless, that our Episcopal Church, with all its existing abuses, and enormous wealth, is utterly inadequate for the moral and religious instruction of the enormous population of our great cities; and yet, fearful that others, by bestowing on the people a simple and honest education, should emancipate them from its orthodox authority, the clergy resist every plan for secular education, with all their might. But we will not talk more of this now, my child. You are fatigued. Your little

room is ready for you, as in days gone by—and you will sleep tranquilly, now you are again at home. May God guard you and your babe."

The lady kissed, and thanked her brother for all his kindness; and then followed old Mary, who carried the little boy from the sofa to the bed prepared for him.

She prayed with tranquillity, and she rested her head in peace on the pillow, for she had no more fears on earth. Neither had she any more hope.

CHAPTER II.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that, ere this day
is done,

The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true,
And what is life, that we should moan? why make so
much ado.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE wishes of Mr. Marston, for his sister's amendment, were not fulfilled. The day after her arrival, the widow was too ill to leave her bed. During the whole of the following week she became gradually more feeble, and the medicines prescribed for her, failed to arrest the progress of her malady. At the end of a fortnight, the

physician who had been called in, pronounced her case hopeless, and candidly confessed, that nothing could be done, save to smooth her passage to the grave.

Her afflicted brother and his faithful servant fulfilled this task to the utmost. The Curate was gratified that he possessed a small patrimony, which enabled him to afford his widowed sister all the comforts that money could procure, but of far greater value to her, was the parental and holy love, with which he watched over her and imparted consolation and hope to her last days upon earth.

Though tears sometimes filled her eyes, when she gazed, with maternal anxiety, on her unconscious infant, the good man's words of promise never failed to restore her to tranquillity. Except on her child's account, she rejoiced at the approach of death; for full of hope of an eternal re-union with her lost husband, she was impatient to depart from a world, where she had known

little happiness, except in his affection, and very much sorrow.

The day came before long, when the heart of the widow was at rest. Her death was serene and painless. The Curate mourned for her, as if she had been his own child, and tears choked his utterance, as he read the burial service above her grave, in the little narrow, dark burying-ground which, surrounded by black brick buildings, divided the back of his dwelling-house from the Church. Yet he rejoiced that he could see the last resting-place of his beloved sister, from the window of his study ; and such is the force of habit—he marked not its squalid gloom. It was as dear to him as if the daisy-bespangled turf of a village church-yard had covered the sterile mound.

Mr. Marston wrote immediately after the funeral, to acquaint Mr. Elsmere with the death of his brother's widow, and to inform him that she had appointed her own brother to be the guardian of her or-

phan child. No answer was ever returned to this letter. At the end of a month, the worthy Curate was convinced that the boy was completely abandoned by his wealthy relatives, and left entirely to his care. He rejoiced, for his own sake, that it was so; for he had already become so much attached to him, that it would have afflicted him greatly, to have been obliged to give the boy into the hands of persons, by whom he felt certain, he would have been ill educated, and probably neglected.

Time passed on, and the orphan boy grew and prospered, even in that dark and smoky city court, for he was cherished by loving hearts on earth, and who could say what guardian spirits kept watch over him in heaven.

Two years had elapsed since the arrival of the desolate widow at her brother's dwelling, and it was again December, when on a cold stormy evening, as the snow was falling fast, old Mary came into her master's study with tea. Instead of find-

ing him bending over his books, as had been formerly always the case, he was sitting by the fire-side with his nephew on his knee—showing him pictures, and telling him stories, which made the little fellow ever and anon clap his dimpled hands, and laugh with childish glee.

“ Go on uncle—what next,” he cried every moment, when the curate made a pause, and he looked up in his face with such bright, eager eyes, of awakened intellect and love, that Mr. Marston bent down and kissed him, with the proud hope that he might be able to train him, so as one day to be an honour to his country, and a benefactor to mankind.

“ Bless him,” said old Mary, her eyes filling with tears, as she gazed on this homely picture. “ I often think, sir, he is a spirit come down from heaven to comfort our old age.”

“ And his spirit has come down from heaven—and is confided to our care,” answered the curate solemnly. “ Woe to

them who neglect such a trust. God give me strength and ability to train it, to all that is noble, and just, and true—God give me a life long enough to prepare him to pass without contamination through the vanities, the follies, and the corruptions of this trying world."

And these words of the good curate were no momentary ebullition of feeling, to be forgotten as soon as uttered. From the hour that his little nephew was left under his guardianship, his education was the principal object of his existence. He felt that a talent had been committed to his care, for whose improvement he was accountable. No doubt many parents would have disapproved of the method he followed in the fulfilment of this task, and those whose whole conduct and ideas are in obedience to established rules, would certainly have considered Mr. Marston's ideas on the subject of education exceedingly eccentric and objectionable. But the curate was a man who judged for him-

self, in all things. He was capable of original thought, and his actions were the result of his thoughts.

This independence influenced the whole tenour of his life, and some of his parishioners were of opinion that it influenced also his religion. In fact, he was no bigot. He did not limit his charities to the frequenters of his church ; he inquired into no man's belief on scholastic points of faith ; and had he preached to a more fashionable and numerous congregation, he would probably have been speedily called by his rector to account for his unorthodox doctrines, and for sermons which enforced no particular articles of belief, and pleaded more in favour of universal charity and love, than against heresies and sects.

But as it was, his rector knew very little about what he preached, and only occasionally gave him a reprimand, when he complained, that with his best endeavours, his labour was inadequate to per-

form the duties of so large and so poor a parish.

“ You waste too much time in the school,” he was told,—“ You meddle too much with the concerns of other people. The more you do for beggars and paupers the more they require of you. I am told you spoil them, Mr. Marston, and I should be better pleased if you limited your attention to christenings, marriages, and funerals, after the performance of your Sunday duties. Now and then, perhaps, it may be as well to visit the school, to be certain that the children are properly taught the catechism, and a due respect for the church, but that is quite sufficient, when the master is under your direction.”

“ But the poor do not always know the value of education,” answered the curate, “ and many of their children would never be sent to school at all, if I did not visit the parents, and pay some attention to the matter.”

“ So much the better,” answered the rector. “ It is not our fault, when schools are there, if the people won’t profit by them; and—between ourselves—the less they learn, the better. A little knowledge only unsettles their minds, and makes them discontented. Education has made the middle classes almost all sectarians.”

Mr. Marston might have answered, that the true reason of this apostacy would be found in the abuses of the Church ; but he knew it was in vain to reply, and quietly resolved to do what he considered his duty, as far as his strength permitted, without attending to his rector’s objections.

Amongst Mr. Marston’s poor parishioners, was a silk weaver, named James D’Arcy. This man lived with his wife in a back room of a house looking into the church-yard, immediately opposite the study window of the curate. He had come there on his marriage with a fresh, pretty, country girl, whose blooming, fair, English beauty contrasted strongly with the fine, but some-

what sallow features of her husband, who sprung from a family of French refugees, still retained the dark complexion, and black hair and eyes of his forefathers. The lonely curate insensibly became interested in the little household concerns of his neighbours. It was evident that affection and good feeling enlivened their humble dwelling, and though poor, yet as long as their industry sufficed to procure them the necessaries of life, they were happy, and the young wife, at least, was gay. He loved to hear her sing, as she sat at her loom, he loved to hear her cheerful voice, as she tended her canary, and the flower that stood at her window, and whenever he met the weaver and his wife, neatly dressed, returning arm-and-arm from their house of prayer, he never failed to salute them. And thus a tacit acquaintance, and a sort of neighbourly love sprung up between them, in spite of what worldly people would call their difference of station.

But the innocent happiness of these poor

people was not of long duration. Owing to a stagnation in the silk trade, the man was long out of work. He had saved nothing ; for his earnings previously had scarcely sufficed for the maintenance of his wife and her three young babes, who had followed each other rapidly into the world, during the first four years of their marriage ; and the sufferings of the poor man were very keen, when he saw the strength and bloom of his young wife wasting away from actual want of food. He shrunk from the humiliation of seeking parish relief ; neither could he beg, but he went out into the streets, and earned a few pence daily by carrying parcels, or some other chance employment. Fortunately, Mr. Marston observed, before long, the alteration in the poor woman's appearance ; he observed also, that James D'Arcy no longer worked at his loom all day as he had formerly done ; but was often out or sat reading, sad and silent, for hours together ; and the good curate, conjecturing the reason for these

changes, went at once to ascertain from the weaver himself the real state of the case, and offer all the assistance in his power.

He saw much in the character of these poor people during their affliction, which added respect to the pity he had previously felt for them. On their side, the curate's kindness was never forgotten. He had not only relieved them from the pinching severity of want, but he had rendered, the man especially, a great moral benefit, by his benevolent ministry, and had softened a heart becoming stern and morose, from suffering, and lack of sympathy.

The weaver again obtained work, and he was able once more to supply the wants of his family by his industry; but affliction does not lightly depart from the house where it has once spread the shadow of its wings. His two elder children soon afterwards sickened and died—probably in consequence of the deprivations they

had undergone, and when the curate's little nephew was five years old, the family of the D'Arcys was reduced to one girl, about two years younger.

Kate D'Arcy was a pretty little delicate creature, with black eyes, so large, and lashes so long, that they seemed out of all proportion with the rest of her face. She was very pale and thin, for the air of the narrow London streets was the purest atmosphere she ever breathed, and her food was at the best of times scanty and poor. But the very feebleness of the gentle, quiet, little creature, won the love of Mr. Marston and his nephew. The strong, healthy boy delighted to feel himself the aider and protector of the girl ; and when his lessons were over, he tormented his uncle and old Mary perpetually, to let Kate come and play with him. The house-keeper seconded his petition, for she was glad to have him amused, and the D'Arcys, she said, were honest people, whose child could teach him no harm. So the silk

weaver's little daughter came every morning to the curate's, and when the weather was fine, the two children played all day together, on the graves in the old church-yard. The happiness of both was then complete, and unlike the happiness of after life, knew neither past, nor future. The shadow of death had not extended its chilling influence to the pure and fearless souls of those little ones.

When Mr. Marston began to teach the boy to read and write, little Kate shared his lessons, and in their play hours he helped her with her tasks, or she sang to him in the sweet voice of childhood, little ballads which she had learnt from her mother. In the long winter evenings, they delighted to sit by old Mary's spinning-wheel, in the curate's kitchen, listening to a fairy tale, or some marvellous history of departed giants, and on a Sunday afternoon, they were allowed to go together to the weaver's, where D'Arcy read to them such stories from

the Bible as they were able to understand.

It was one of Mr. Marston's principles, that his nephew should be taught to love his neighbours, whatever might be their rank; and that he should learn in boyhood, thoroughly to understand, and sympathize with the poor. He believed it was the only method to make him acquainted with the lower classes, and insure his growing up to manhood, with a true feeling of Christian love, and Christian equality. But at the same time, he carefully prevented his associating with those, whom poverty, or vice, had morally degraded. D'Arcy he knew to be a man gifted, by nature, with the noblest faculties, and who had taken advantage of every leisure hour to make up for the deficiencies of a neglected education, and his scanty means of obtaining knowledge; and he was quite convinced that under his roof, the boy could learn nothing evil.

The intimacy of the children gradually

brought the curate and his industrious neighbour, more frequently in contact with each other ; and Mr. Marston found pleasure, not only in supplying D'Arcy with books, when he had time to read, but also in sitting with him an hour, from time to time, and discussing the opinions and facts contained in these volumes.

This friendly intercourse opened a new existence to the weaver.

“Oh, sir,” he said one evening to the curate as they sat together. “I cannot tell you what a debt of gratitude I owe you.”

“It is little I can do for you, James,” was the reply.

“You have done more than any living man ever did, sir. You have taught me to understand and enjoy the strength of my own mind. Before I knew you, sir, my thoughts were a burthen and a torment to me. I had no one to speak to, who understood me; I had no one to explain

what I did not understand. It is hard, sir, for a man to feel that he has something in his heart and his head, that deserves better than contempt and starvation, and yet in this great intellectual city to be disabled by poverty, from exchanging a thought, or even a word, with those, who enjoy the advantages of knowledge and education ; my mind has been starved almost to madness—it consumed my body, but now it has healthy food, and I thank you, Mr. Marston. You have done a noble act—you have saved a fellow creature here and hereafter, and though my creed is not that of your Episcopal Church, I respect you, sir, with my whole soul, as a true and pious christian.”

“ You are a good man, James, and if I have done you any service, I have my reward,” answered the curate simply.

“ Mr. Marston,” returned the weaver, “ I know the full value of the condescension of a man of learning and virtue, such as

yours, when he sits down and converses like a brother, with a poor, unlettered labourer, like myself. Yes, sir, and it is for that I love you, if you will excuse my using the expression; for it convinces me that you not only profess, but practise the doctrines of Christ, who came to raise the spirits of the poor and lowly, and proclaim the knowledge of all good things to the slaves, as well as to their masters."

"In the sight of God, we are indeed all equal," said the curate, "but even in the most perfect state of society, knowledge can only be equalized, in proportion to the abilities of men.—Equality of rights, may exist, but all other equality is chimerical, as long as men are born with unequal endowments. No distinction of classes has ever sufficed to raise fools to the level of the wise, and never will, whatever the proud may think."

"I doubt if our rector would acknowledge the same," said the weaver with a

sly smile," for I verily believe he acknowledges no wisdom except in lawn sleeves. No—no Mr. Marston—such men as you, are very rare, and it is well not only for me and my little girl, but also for your own nephew, that Providence placed us within the influence of your beneficent knowledge."

"The boy's misfortunes placed him under my care," returned Mr. Marston. "He was born to great riches, but perhaps it was heaven's pleasure, to save him from the dangers attendant on their possession. For my part, I rejoice exceedingly that he has not been exposed to the noxious influence of luxurious schools and private tutors, where the rich commonly imbibe all the prejudices of their class, and the miserable rivalries of money and fashion, even before they arrive at man's estate. I trust now, he may become an active and useful member of society, and his education, and the new hopes it has awakened in my heart, afford me indescribable

pleasure. I am, what many men consider poor—and have been so, all my life ; but as the contempt and pity of the rich does not wound me, I have a vast store of happiness within my reach. The pleasures of the mind are not costly, James."

" You have never known want, sir, and your conscience has never reproached you," returned D'Arcy, with a deep sigh. " You have thus escaped the two severest of earthly trials. May you never experience them."

The good curate felt the truth of this reply ; yet the allusion to the pangs of conscience, somewhat surprised him from the lips of his worthy neighbour ; but he did not then question him further, for his mind had wandered from the subject of their discourse, to vague reflections on the existing state of society, and the inequalities which he clearly saw, were becoming daily more marked and unhealthy.

CHAPTER III.

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature,
The balm, the bliss, the beauty and the bloom,
The bounteous Providence in every feature,
Recall the high Creator to his creature.

Hood.

IT is scarcely necessary for us to inform our readers, that Mr. Marston was generally considered a very eccentric man. Few men can live alone in seclusion, as he had done, till near the age of fifty, without contracting habits, different from those of ordinary mortals, in the observance of which, their happiness in some measure depends. His little nephew's residence

with him, had happily snapped asunder some of his self-imposed chains of custom ; but still there were sundry points of difference between the old housekeeper and her master, which even the boy's influence did not suffice to remove.

The worthy woman had an indomitable love of cleaning and putting things in order, whilst her master, with an utter contempt of dust and cobwebs, would not allow a paper, nor a book to be touched in his study. He would not submit, he said, to have a broom thrust in his face, every time he put his head out of his own room, on Saturday ; so old Mary was at last obliged to submit to her master's whims, and be content to scrub and clean, only when he was from home. In other points the old woman sometimes gained the victory. She insisted on the curate's buying a new coat, before the old one was absolutely out at the elbows. She took care that he had clean linen, and a respectable suit for Sunday ; and she never allowed him

to go unshaved, more than two successive days. Though Mr. Marston would frequently have deprived himself almost of the necessaries of life, in order to relieve the poor, in times of great want, she took care that his table was sufficiently, though simply supplied, and that a pint of porter was regularly placed beside his plate. Wine never entered the curate's dwelling, except in case of sickness. Old Mary's service was in truth a labour of love, and the wel'are of her master and his nephew was all that interested her upon earth. And thus this little household lived on in love, year after year, offering a strange contrast, in its peaceful simplicity, to the whirl of ambitious speculation, of dissipation and of vice, in its immediate neighbourhood ; and the lives of the curate and his family glided away as calmly and as unknown, in the midst of the most stirring city in the world, as if they had dwelt in some secluded valley of the Alps.

Yet time was silently working changes

in them all, though at the end of ten years it was in the youngest, that the greatest alteration was apparent. Little Kate no longer had a companion in the lessons which the curate still continued to give her, for her playfellow Leonard, had been sent as a scholar to St. Paul's school, when he was ten years old. But the children's affection for each other was not interrupted by this separation. Though Kate felt it as a lasting sorrow, the spirits of the boy, on the contrary, were gladdened by an association with others of his own age ; but still, when evening came, he was impatient to recount to the weaver's little daughter, all that had passed during their separation, or to carry her some little present, to console her for his absence.

In his studies, Leonard made rapid progress, and the active sports of his companions were, for a time, a joy beyond expression to his buoyant spirit. But the charm soon wore off. When they were no longer a novelty, they did not suffice to

content his imagination. He had, even at this early age, the need of something more to occupy his mind, than the mere exercise of healthy strength, which the games of his school-fellows afforded, and before many weeks had passed, he absented himself frequently from their play-ground.

But he did not return home — he wandered away to the British Museum, to gaze on the old marbles, which, to his young fancy, recounted the marvels and the mysteries of the buried past ; or, in summer, he strolled to Kensington Gardens, and sat motionless, for hours, beside the water, watching the reflection of the ancient trees, or of the flying clouds, as the wind varied their shadows and their forms. He generally held a book of poetry in his hand, endeavouring to learn some passage by heart ; but there his talent was at fault, for his brain was too fully occupied by his own crowding and ever changing ideas, to leave him capable of retaining the images or the words of another.

But nevertheless he was not a mere idle dreamer. However his imagination might assert its supremacy at times, it was in useful activity, that the full energy of his character was displayed. Once aroused, and thoroughly inspired by the object he had in view, and it was always a noble one, he was capable of accomplishing in one day, what it would have cost other boys of his age a week to perform, whether the task was one of mental or bodily labour. He was slow to begin, for he doubted his powers ; but this modesty once overcome, he forgot himself in the ardour of activity, and he was dismayed by no difficulties, he was retarded by no fear of trouble or danger. If a fire occurred in London before the close of night, he was sure to be there ; the might and majesty of the roaring element gave him an indefinite pleasure, long before he understood the nature of his feelings, or knew that he was impressed by the same sublime power of the elements which gives their

glory to the Alps, and its grandeur to the Ocean.

Sometimes, Mr. Marston was uneasy at the long absences of his nephew ; but when the boy, on his return, related to him where he had been, and he discovered, from a few earnest expressions, the impression which the sights and sounds he had witnessed had made on his young mind, the curate had no longer any fears of his being led astray, even when wandering alone in the great labyrinths of London.

And Leonard also saw and marked much of the under currents of human life, during these prolonged rambles ; and his knowledge of human life, even at an early age, was very different from that of a youth, who had been bred either in green fields or splendid drawing-rooms. He was well acquainted with the daily deprivations of the thousands of human beings, who seem born only to toil and suffer ; he saw how frequently want, misery, and despair, degrade to vice ; and though he shrank

from the crimes he often, involuntarily, witnessed, with horror, he felt, too truly, the causes from which the demoralization of society sprang, not to regard its victims with sorrow and commiseration.

The worthy curate, with certain prejudices derived from his own university education, did not fail to impart to his nephew an extensive and clear knowledge both of the Greek and Latin classics. He justly regarded this as the best foundation for a pure and correct taste. But it was not with the past only that the boy was content to deal. He had been too largely initiated into the literature of his time, and the spirit of action was too strong within him, for him to remain for ever content to peruse the thoughts, or to admire the creations of others. His busy imagination sought restlessly to reproduce and to give a form to the ideas which crowded on his brain, in colours, or in words.

The curate marked the struggle that was going on in his pupil's mind. He saw,

that he felt the consciousness of mental strength, and the desire for mental activity, without knowing how, or in what manner, to exercise his powers. But the old man looked on for a time in silence. He had trained and strengthened his nephew's mind, and he now waited with the exulting anticipation, that, true to the principles in which he had been educated, he would finally choose an honourable and a noble pursuit. Of the boy's idleness he had no dread; and he rejoiced that, though his fortune was small, he yet possessed the means to aid him in the studies necessary for a profession.

To the church, the youth decidedly objected. His imagination was too vivid, and his desire of activity too great for the monotonous life of a curate to have any charms for him. From the idea of the law, or the labour of a merchant's office, he shrank with absolute horror. He had read too much poetry in the old church-yard; and his uncle had too faithfully ful-

filled his task of awakening and exalting his youthful mind to an admiration for all things true and noble and beautiful in the moral and physical world, for the drudgery of law, or commerce, to be supportable to him. His feelings and ways of thinking were all, as his education had been, totally different from those of others of his own age. He was entirely free from every taint of prejudice—whether of class or party—the rarest of all qualities to be found in England—he had neither vanity nor pride, nor paltry personal ambition. There was nothing either selfish or little in his mind, though at the same time he was neither dreaming nor fastidious. Happily for him, he had not been pampered by indulgence nor luxury; but trained and disciplined by poverty, the labour of hard study, and daily association with strong and healthy thinkers of more advanced age, and greater experience than himself.

Largely gifted with imagination, the distinguishing characteristics of his mind were

truth, keenness of observation, and an almost intuitive insight into the characters of those with whom he came in contact. With a different education, and under other circumstances, he might have become a distinguished politician—but destiny had given his mind another direction, and he decided to be a painter.

Mr. Marston, whose life had been one of practical utility, had some doubts as to the wisdom of his nephew's choice ; but Leonard talked with so much enthusiasm, of the influence of the arts on the morals and social progress of nations, that the curate hoped he was right, and did not take time narrowly to consider whether they were not rather a consequence than a cause of civilization.

He was conscious that his nephew was endowed with a far more vivid imagination than himself, and that it was necessary for his happiness, that this faculty should be exercised on noble objects; and though well aware, that the pursuit of money as a law-

yer or a merchant, would have assured him a more honourable position in society, than he could ever hope to attain as a painter, he did not oppose his wishes. He trusted, the education he had given him, would render him independent of the world as regarded his mere social position; but on this point, he thought it necessary to speak to him clearly and explicitly. He did not however, then think it advisable to reveal to him the mysterious circumstances connected with his birth; for he still hoped that, by the repentance of his relatives, or some other unforeseen occurrence, he might be spared the humiliation of knowing he had ever been supposed to be the offspring of dishonour. On this account he had hitherto always called him by his mother's name, and no one knew whether Leonard Marston was the son of a brother or a sister of the curate.

Mr. Marston had been intimate in early life with one of the most distinguished artists of the day; and to this gentleman, he

applied for counsel, as to the direction of his nephew's studies. By his advice, during the four following years, Leonard profited by all the best artistic instruction which London afforded. At the end of that period, he was pronounced, by competent judges, to possess talents likely to place him at the summit of his art.

During all this time, Mr. Marston had not neglected little Kate. When Leonard no longer shared her lessons, he still allowed her to come to him for a couple of hours daily; and he continued to give her such useful instruction, as he considered best calculated to strengthen her character, and her principles, as a preparation to meet the dangers and difficulties, to which, in her station, she was likely to be exposed. He took care, likewise, that she should learn all female works, whilst, by her mother, she was taught the art of weaving velvet in perfection.

She grew up to be the delight of her father's life; pretty, modest, industrious;

and with so healthy, pure and cultivated a mind, that the weaver regarded his child almost as a superior being.

She and Leonard still loved each other, like a brother and a sister, as they had done in childhood; and as the youth was to go, when he had reached his nineteenth year, to complete his studies in Italy, Mr. Marston had no apprehension of this innocent attachment being replaced by any warmer feeling.

As Leonard became expert in the use of his pencil, his uncle allowed him to appropriate a high garret as a painting-room; and both the Curate and his old house-keeper were compelled to endure with patience, the trial of sitting for their portraits, which when finished, by the hand of their darling, were pronounced to be perfect wonders of art. No one, then, remained to paint, but little Kate; and though James D'Arcy, more prudent than Mr. Marston, was somewhat unwilling that she should be exposed to

such an ordeal, his objections were not listened to, and he was obliged to accept half a sovereign, to indemnify him for the loss of the girl's work, whilst she came every day, for a week, to sit to the young artist. It had never occurred to Leonard's mind before, to observe whether or not Kate D'Arcy were pretty; but when she sat in what he called his chair of execution, blushing and smiling, half pleased and half ashamed, he was struck, at once, by the fine contour of her features, and the charming expression of her innocent countenance. She was not fresh and blooming like most girls of her age—and many would have called her complexion sallow; but her skin was fine and soft, and a colour mounted to her cheeks with every change of emotion. Her hair was jet black, and her large eyes and long eye-lashes, no longer appeared disproportioned to her face, but whenever she looked up, gave a lustrous charm, by no means of an English character, to her whole face.

Gradually as Leonard pursued his work, he became perfectly inspired by the uncommon beauty of his model. As the light fell from the high window on her drooping head, he was aware, for the first time, of the charming lines of the nose and forehead, the sweetness which seemed to hover around the curved lips; and, above all, of the expression perpetually changing from mournful and earnest thought, to a timid and blushing gaiety. He felt that he had now not only to paint matter, but mind; and though the task was difficult, it was one of infinite service to him in his art. It opened to him far wider and nobler views, than any other lesson could have imparted to him.

Happily for him, though he regarded his model, at the conclusion of her picture, with very different feelings from those he had entertained for her at the commencement, yet his enthusiasm for his art, made him often, during its progress, forget all beside, and no lasting passion was awakened

by his prolonged contemplation of the weaver's daughter. The heart of the poor girl unconsciously received a deeper impression, and often, in after years, did she look back to those hours as the happiest of her existence.

These new feelings of the maiden greatly enhanced her pain when the hour arrived for her separation from Leonard, on the morning of his departure for Italy ; and though she wished him farewell with apparent composure, her mother was terrified, by her wild burst of passionate weeping, after she returned to their own dwelling. The good woman understood the cause of this sorrow, and it pained her greatly ; but she gave no utterance to her suspicions ; she trusted that time and absence would obliterate such a hopeless attachment ; and she carefully avoided any mention of the young painter for the future.

Leonard departed, unconscious of the love he had left behind, and grieving most, to leave the uncle who had so ten-

derly and judiciously supplied to him the loss of his parents. The feelings of Mr. Marston were naturally of a more melancholy hue. At his age, he foresaw the possibility of death rendering their separation eternal. Their last breakfast together passed in almost total silence. The mind of the old man had wandered back to the evening when Leonard had been brought, by his dying mother, beneath his roof.

“My dear boy,” he said at length, solemnly, “we are about to part—it may be for ever. God pardon me, if I have failed in any way in my duty towards you.”

“You have been more than a father to me, sir,” returned the youth, in agitated accents, “and, believe me, I love you as a son. I can ill express my feelings.”

“You need not,” said the curate. “We understand each other, and that is enough. Remember the lessons I have given you, and never forget, in the pursuit of honours,

or wealth, that your first duty is to live and die an honest man."

With an impulse of feeling he could not master, the curate then clasped his nephew to his heart, whilst tears moistened his furrowed cheeks.

Leonard warmly returned his embrace, and thus they parted. The young man went forth full of energy, and hope, and imagination, to pursue the journey of life, where all glowed bright before him. The old man returned to his dim study, to gaze upon the old church-yard, and to meditate on the time when he should be laid there to rest, beside his sister's grave.

Four years elapsed before Leonard Marston returned to England. He had resided in Rome ; he had visited Athens, Constantinople, and the south of Spain ; and he had won, not only the reputation of being a rising artist of very remarkable talent, but an accomplished gentleman. He had been received with favour into the most distinguished circles of foreign society ;

he had been presented at many courts—yet he contrived to defray his expenses almost entirely by the sale of the productions of his pencil, and had felt a proud satisfaction in making very small demands on the generosity of his kind old uncle.

CHAPTER IV.

With sweet, kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home ;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps, instead of bees, have formed the comb.

Hool.

IT was a light morning, very early in Spring, and the hawthorn hedges of old England were scarcely tinged with green. But in a narrow lane, in a midland county, the vegetation was further advanced than in all the surrounding neighbourhood. It was sheltered by high hills to the north and east, and the light chalky soil was like

a hot-bed for the spring flowers. There the woodbine was already green, and primroses were peeping out upon the banks ; a brook ran gurgling under a line of old gnarled willows on the left of the road, which wound on, about a mile in the vale, past one noble mansion, and several tall, brown-roofed, old farm houses, towards a little village, at the foot of the eastern hills, where a church spire, surrounded by about a dozen cottages, arose in an open space between the wide spreading woods.

No railway had yet penetrated this secluded spot ; but still it was not exempt from the influence of this grand invention. The foot passenger who approached the village that morning, with rapid strides, had been left, about two hours before, at the nearest station by the train from London.

He was a tall, handsome young man, about three and twenty, although, his complexion having been rendered unusually dark, by long and frequent exposure to the

heat of foreign climates, he might have been supposed to be somewhat older. Athletic and well formed, there was yet a certain grace in his vigorous and elastic movements, and his dark eyes shone with high intelligence, as he glanced, from time to time, around over the landscape. It was not connected in his mind with any youthful remembrances, for he believed that he visited it for the first time ; but still it gave him pleasure, for to every native of Britain, who has been long absent in foreign climes, English scenery conveys the feeling of home ; and though the place was unknown to him, he was returning to re-visit the friend and protector of his youth.

Full of hope, and youth, and health, with a spirit unbroken by misfortune, he hurried on, and having crossed a stream, at the skirts of the village green, by a single plank, he enquired of an old man, who was working in his garden, which was the curate's house. He was directed to an old

building, very much like the surrounding farm-houses, under the shadow of the church-yard trees, and thither he, at once, proceeded.

Ere he had passed the little garden before it, the front door was opened from within, and the clergyman himself advanced to give him a joyous welcome.

It was Mr. Marston. During the absence of his nephew, he had lost his city curacy by the death of his rector, and, houseless in his old age, had accepted the curacy of Brookdale with fifty pounds a year.

With inexpressible delight, the old man led his nephew into the little parlour, which he had made his study, whither old Mary, as soon as she heard his voice, rushed in from the kitchen, with her hands covered with flour, and laughed and cried with pleasure, when her young master shook hands with her in contempt of this impediment.

That day was the happiest of the old

curate's existence. As he gazed on his noble and handsome nephew, he no longer felt alone upon earth, but exulted with the same pride in the young man's success, as if he had been his own son. With eager delight he listened to his narratives of his various adventures in foreign lands, and his descriptions of Italy and Greece, in the perusal of whose historians, philosophers, and poets, he had passed the greatest part of his life.

He could hardly persuade himself that the little boy, he had nursed on his knee, had actually trodden the plains of Marathon, had seen the prison of Socrates, and dined on the Forum of Pompey. But when the young artist spread before the secluded student the drawings he had made upon the spot, of the perishing relics of Roman and Grecian antiquities, he seemed transported to another world.

It would be vain to say they realized his pre-conceived ideas; on the contrary, they upset the whole fabric of creations he

had been erecting for above fifty years. Imagination, even when aided by descriptions, can form no true pictures, unless memory spreads the canvass, and a world was at once opened to the curate's view, of which he had previously only vague ideas. Here was the reality before him—the Roman Forum—the Acropolis of Athens, desolate and perishing, but still majestic in their ruins, and peopled with the undying spirits of antiquity, and still glowing in the same brilliant sunshine, which inspired the sculptors of Athens and the poets of Rome.

Mr. Marston felt as if two thousand years had actually been added to his existence, and it was greatly to his annoyance, that old Mary dispelled his illusions, by summoning him and his nephew to the dinner, which she had prepared with not less delight, in celebration of her boy's return.

“Come, dear Leonard,” said the old man, when they were seated at table, “we

can at least talk over our plates, and we can open your portfolios, and return to Greece another day."

"Yes, my dear uncle, when you please," was the reply, "but for the present, let me hear a little about yourself. First of all, how do you like your change of abode?"

"I cannot say much about that," answered the curate, brushing his hand across his brow. "The place is very dull, but no doubt it will be better, now you are come."

"Dull, uncle!" exclaimed Leonard, with some surprise. "I thought it was exactly such a retreat, as you had been sighing for all your life! with hills and lanes, and running brooks, like the village where you were born, of which you always talked with such regret."

"Yes, I must confess to that," answered Mr. Marston, with some embarrassment; "but, I suppose, we change as we grow older. The place is very pretty and rural, and so forth; but, to speak truth, I miss

the bustle of Cheapside. I was quiet enough in my old court, and I had the blessed hope of resting one day by your mother's grave: and then, when I was weary of solitude, I had only to open the door, and I found myself in all the amusing variety of busy, active London."

" You used to complain of the fogs, sir—and the beggars, and the crowded population."

" Yes, I suppose we all complain, wherever we may be—but I had got accustomed to all those annoyances—and habit you know is second nature. Sheep and cows, and meadows and daisies, are pretty dreams ; but now I have been forced to return to them in reality, I must confess, I prefer London fogs, and London noise, and London bustle, for every-day life. I feel here, sometimes, as if I was buried alive for the remainder of my existence. Rather an uncomfortable feeling, Leonard, you must allow."

" I understand it quite, sir ! you have

been too much alone. But have you no neighbours?"

"None like our old friend, James D'Arcy, the silk weaver," answered the curate, "at least as he was, when we first knew him. I know not what came over him, but he changed sadly after his wife's death. He was a wise man, who was greedy of learning; but the people of that class here are all unlettered boors, excepting a pragmatical sexton, who fancies himself a very Solomon. The poverty of London sharpens men's wits, but here it stultifies them."

"But you find innocence at least," said the artist.

"Innocence! Take it as a rule, innocence can rarely exist with ignorance, and poverty, and abject servitude. The worst crimes have commonly occurred in the most miserable agricultural districts, where the poor are not excited to improvement by the companions of their own class, as is the case in our great towns. The

peasantry are no better educated than in the time of Henry the Eighth. The village schools in this neighbourhood are a disgrace to the country. The clergy insist on keeping them in their power; and they either don't understand the wants of a great and progressing people, or they endeavour, systematically, to keep them back, by an education which is worse than none at all."

"Popular education is best understood in Switzerland," said the artist, earnestly. "Yes, there the government directs and compels it. And it is marvellous how well, in some Cantons, the whole system is conducted at little cost."

"Here, on the contrary, the poor are only corrupted, not enlightened by civilization," answered the curate. "The great aim of all Church of England instruction is, to keep them ignorant of their real position in society; and with a becoming reverence for all who have money in their purse. They thank the Squire

for a shilling, and his wife for a bottle of physic, as if the labourer had no right to his hire. Poor souls, they are the proper slaves for gentlemen farmers, who live well, and pay high rents; and fine landlords who have a station to keep up in society, and to live in London, and Paris, and elsewhere, at twice the expence their fathers did, with daughters to marry, and younger sons to provide for, without diminishing the family estate."

" You draw a sad picture, sir," returned Leonard.

" But not an untrue one ! The gentlemen who wish to keep corn dear, and rents up, are particularly fond of a half starved peasantry—for then they can complain of bad times, and poor rates; whereas, if rents were lowered, so that the farmers could pay their workmen, as all human beings have a right to be paid, justly—the poor rates would be nearly at an end. I asked a proud gentleman, whose house stands round the corner of the hill, when

he was calling out for a duty on corn, how much higher his rents now were, than was paid before the war. He has never asked me to enter his house since."

"I don't wonder, sir!" rejoined the young man, with a smile.

"The abuses here are worse than in London," pursued the curate, with warmth. "The better classes all understand and favour each other. The parish officers are well paid; eat well, drink well, and make a good thing of their charge. That is their first object. The old story—it is luxury which robs the poor of their just hire. Parish expenses are all paid by the poor man's labours, and parish expenses are a job in this remote village, as well as in the populous towns, where a small fry of respectable citizens picks the public pocket. Gas-works, water-works, drainage, road cess, and heaven knows what besides, are all made jobs, so that gold may stick to somebody's fingers."

"But modern progress has made such

things absolutely necessary," returned Leonard.

"Perhaps so! but the progress would be far greater, if they were justly, simply, and economically conducted. Why I read, sir, of a town, the other day, which had a dispute about new water-works, before the House of Commons, which cost twenty thousand pounds, before a single pipe was laid. Now who was the better for that, but the lawyers; and who paid for it, but the poor?"

"And so, sir, you are quite without society," enquired the artist, anxious to turn the current of his uncle's thoughts.

"There is a Hall, half a mile distant from the village," said the curate, "but the family has never been there since I came. They have been abroad, spending the produce of the broad acres, for miles around. Squire Blunt and his lady called on me; but I have offended him, as I told you."

"There is a pretty house in the planta-

tions to the right, as I came up the lane?" persisted Leonard.

"That belongs to a London merchant, Mr. Lesley, who has made his money by trade. He has a son, a barrister, who took high honour sat Oxford, and who, from what I have heard, is a very great puppy. A mental puppy. One of the new England clique, who wishes to be an aristocrat without the essentials of ancient family, and inherited prejudices. He would suit neither of us, Leonard."

"Not by your description, certainly, sir," answered the young man, laughing.

"I wish you could remain a few weeks with me," pursued his uncle. "It seems to give me new life, to look into your bright face, and enjoy a little rational conversation."

"I will return in the summer, when the London season is past."

"Aye! do, my dear boy, and I wish, with all my heart, I could go back again with you. You cannot think how during

the long evenings last winter, I missed the muffin man's bell; and then the postman—the ever welcome postman—in the old times I loved to hear his bell tinkling, just as the shutters were closed, and the fire made up for the evening. I hear nothing but the owls here on such nights, and I am not used to them, Leonard, that is the truth of it."

"I regret I must leave you in a couple of days," said his nephew. "I expect my packages from Italy, and must enter the lodgings I have engaged in Newman Street. I shall have a capital painting-room, though somewhat darker than my *Atelier* in Rome."

"In two days!" echoed the curate, "that is sad news! but you must go—you must go—I must not make you neglect your profession."

"I have two pictures to send to the Exhibition, and I hope I shall soon have work as a portrait painter, for I have brought many letters of introduction from families

of distinction, who were in Rome last winter; and those with whom I was acquainted there, have invited me to call on them on my return to England."

"Don't trust too much to introductions and professions," answered the old man, with a sly nod. "Many who were mighty glad to be assisted by the young artist on the Continent, will know nothing at all about him when they are home again in their fine, exclusive society. They don't consider an artist a gentleman. But don't let that make you unhappy. You have chosen your profession, and you must take the consequences. No false pride must embitter your life; rather be thankful that God has been pleased to bless you with talents, with pure and noble ideas, and the wish, and the power, to communicate them."

"I am often astonished, uncle," answered Leonard, "how you have learnt to know the world, so justly as you do. I must confess that even my short experience has

taught me the truth of every word you have uttered. I have left cards, at three houses in London, of people to whose service I had devoted much time when in Naples and Rome ; but no visit has been returned, nor has the least notice been taken of me, in any way."

"Perhaps it is all for the best," answered Mr. Marston, "you will thus be preserved from the enervating influence of fine society, and the mortifications to which it would inevitably expose you. You will now be thrown entirely on the resources of your own genius ; and, excited by this very neglect, devote your whole mind and talents to attain a high place in your art ; to command that attention and respect by your works, which, in your profession, no moderate efforts can attain. Courage, my boy—courage—there is good stuff in you, and the reward of perseverance will, one day, be yours."

"I do not lack courage, and I hope, not strength," answered Leonard, whilst his

dark eyes flashed with the consciousness, and the enthusiasm of genius," and no petty slights can mortify me. I thank you, my dear uncle, every hour of my life, that you brought me up, independent of all social prejudices, and taught me early to pay no regard to opinion, which estimates a man's worth by his class. You have thus spared me the unutterable pangs of discontented pride and vanity. The pride of honesty, I trust I possess, and that can neither be mortified nor humbled, by the empty pride of position and wealth."

"Right—right! You have returned from the corruptions of Italy, with a healthy mind and a strong frame; and you fill my old heart with gladness and rejoicing. God bless you, Leonard, I am proud I have lived to see you thus," said the old man in tremulous accents, and he brushed away the tears which dimmed his eyes.

"Now tell me," said his nephew, hastily changing the subject, "what has become

of the D'Arcys. I went to the old house, when I was in London, but I could learn no tidings of them."

"I am quite unable to give you any information concerning their present abode," replied the curate.

"Mrs. D'Arcy died about three years ago, and after that, James got in a very excited state, particularly on political subjects. The times were very hard, and I suspect he was drawn into certain associations of a dangerous tendency. Kate maintained both him and herself, poor girl, by working at a milliner's in St. Paul's church-yard. But she had much that was unpleasant to bear, and I sometimes repented that I had been the means of giving her an education superior to her station in life, for it made her more keenly feel the hardships, and perhaps the insults, to which she was exposed.'

"Pretty Kate ! she was a modest, innocent creature, when I left," returned Leonard.

“Yes, but she was never cheerful afterwards,” said the old gentleman. “She was never like other girls. She never decked herself out on Sundays, to look after sweethearts ; but she was pale and sad, though she grew prettier every day. I often thought she half-starved herself, that her father might feel no want. After her mother died, she dined once a week with old Mary, but she drooped sadly. I never more heard her merry songs across the old church-yard. At last she got some velvet to weave, for which she was better paid, but that did not last long, and she was obliged to go to the milliner’s again.”

“That was no place for her,” replied the artist.

“So said her father, but what was to be done; they wanted bread, and the girl was well principled, so that there was little danger of her being led astray, which was what James dreaded. Poor child she had no vanity.”

“Do you know for what shops he worked?” inquired the young man without looking up. “I will inquire for her there, when I return to London.”

“I have inquired, but in vain. She had quitted that employment, and no one knew anything about her. In fact, James and I had a foolish quarrel, about some political point, of no importance, and he behaved very strangely—I believe it was from illness—but he never entered my house again, and he very soon removed to another part of the town. I soon afterwards left London, and have heard no more of them.”

Leonard made no answer, but he arose, and after walking once or twice up and down the room in silence, he gave his hand to his uncle and wished him a good night.

CHAPTER V.

— I heard my days before me, and the tumult
of my life ;
Yearning for the large excitement that the com-
ing years would yield.

“Locksley Hall.” ALFRED TENNYSON.

LEONARD MARSTON arose soon after the sun appeared above the horizon, on the morning following his arrival at Brookdale. Glad to escape from the close air of cities, he gazed with delight from his window, over the beautiful landscape, where nature was re-awakening after the long slumber of winter, and leaves and blossoms expanding every hour in the warm beams of Spring. The spirit of reviving life breath-

ing over all, thrilled like an inspiration through his brain; and not content to enjoy the restless desire to re-create, the artist's impatient longing to embody his brightest thoughts entirely engrossed him, till he forgot the scenery before him, in contemplating the bright images which imagination re-created.

Active and ingenious, he occupied great part of the forenoon in making little arrangements to add to his uncle's comfort in various ways, and the remaining hours of the day fled rapidly, whilst they discoursed on various subjects of public and private interest.

The story of Leonard's parents, and the facts connected with his birth, were the only secrets which the worthy curate had ever concealed from his nephew. On all other subjects, notwithstanding the difference of their years, he spoke to him with the openness and simplicity of a child; and if on this one important point he had been guilty of deception, it was only to say the

young man pain, but still he sometimes doubted the rectitude of his judgment in thus, for the first time in his life, acting in opposition to the principle, that all deceits are bad. The secret more than once trembled on his lips that morning, as he paced with his nephew, up and down beneath the sunny garden wall, defending a narrow terrace from the east winds on one side, whilst a stone balustrade, covered with budding honeysuckles, and crowned by an old sun-dial, fenced it on the other from a kitchen garden, which sloped below down to the quiet brook.

Here stood the bee-hives, which the old curate delighted to tend,—here his pigeons flew down to be fed, as soon as he appeared under the old stone porch.

“Cardinal de Retz fed his pigeons,” said Mr. Marston, as he scattered his last handful of corn, “that he might learn to have a resource in their companionship, should he ever be deprived, by imprisonment, of the society of his fellow creatures; and for

those who love the Creator in all His works, and in whom old age has laid the passions to rest, there is an inexpressible charm, in taming and attracting the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, by little acts of love. But it is not enough, Leonard, when we know that so much misery exists on the face of the earth ! We need the consciousness of being useful to our suffering fellow creatures, to fill the heart. It is mighty pretty to hear the bees murmur, and see the pigeons flutter round us ; but to support one sinking spirit under the trials of affliction, to wipe the tears of one child of sorrow, to elevate and purify one soul by the knowledge of truth, above the degradation of vice—has a worth surpassing all ; and these are the tasks we must fulfil, if we would earn peace on earth, and joy in eternity. Remember that, my dear boy.”

“ Your whole life has been devoted to these tasks,” said the young man, regarding the benevolent countenance of the

grey-haired curate, with inexpressible veneration and admiration.

“I have done what little I could,” he answered simply, “and I wish you to profit by my experience. Your youthful ambition may be disappointed—your love—for with your character, you must, and will love ardently—may be blighted—your brightest hopes may one day be as shadows of the past—you may be solitary as I am, were it not for you ; but let neither disappointment nor solitude embitter you, against your fellow creatures. They may love themselves better than they love you ; but weary not of kindly thoughts and friendly deeds. Your heart’s benevolence will be your best reward. Every little study and labour is a joy, when the heart and conscience have the feeling of healthy activity. Do what is right—set not too much value upon opinion, and then I have little fear for your happiness. Beware, Leonard, mortified vanity is the disease of which many artists die, and I implore you nourish

not this ulcer in your heart, or all your gifts will become curses. It is the only danger, I dread for you, my son!"

"Then be from henceforth tranquil, my dear uncle," answered Leonard, laughing, "the world has hitherto smiled on me."

"But its smiles are fickle, even for those who most struggle to deserve them. Ah! Leonard—Leonard—you are sanguine!"

"Without that, sir, no difficulty was ever overcome; so do not damp my courage, on the very eve of battle. I will struggle, depend upon it, to the utmost, and if, by ill fortune, the fight is lost, then I will turn to you in the hour of trouble, for consolation. But now, sir, pardon me, if I see the future bright before me, and dash on without fear, to snatch the prizes it awards to courage and success."

"No, my boy, no! you are right, I will not damp your courage. You are not born to follow the tranquil path where I have found peace; and he who has a high and noble inspiration, will not sink even under

bitter trials. I will try not to be anxious about you, Leonard. I know you will never do wrong ; but you must promise to come back as soon as your professional engagements will permit."

" Yes, I will come, without fail !" answered Leonard. " I shall find subjects enough for study in this neighbourhood, and I shall be delighted to spend a fortnight at home ; but I grieve to say I must leave you this very afternoon."

The curate heard this announcement with consternation ; but he was soon convinced of the necessity for his nephew's departure, and consoled by the hope of his speedy return.

The day was fine, and after an early dinner, they set off together on foot, to the railway station, where they parted ; the one to be whirled away to the busy metropolis of the world, to bear a part in the rushing and struggling of the great ocean of human passions ; the other to the passionless retirement of old age, and a solitude only

broken by a communion of love and charity with the poor.

But still the old man sighed for London, sighed for the dirt and the din, and the bustle of the great Babylon. Such is the force of habit. We see it exemplified every day. Men who have been brought up from childhood in the dim obscurity of accredited falsehood and prejudice, cannot support, in their maturity, the pure air of reality, and the freshness of nature. They regard truth as the most dangerous of modern innovators.

“If I had my handful of truths,” said one of these benevolent philanthropists of a foregone generation, “I would not so much as open my little finger to let one escape to the people.”

Such was the morality of the people’s ancient friends; but it is evident their ignorance of all the great principles of social life was as great, as that of the vile multitude whose ignorance they considered it their interests to prolong. But

their reign is over! truth is no longer to be imprisoned by their little fingers, nor monopolised for the benefit nor the enlightenment of a privileged class.

When Leonard Marston reached London, his first business was to have his luggage and furniture conveyed to his new apartment in Newman Street. Though he had only engaged a first and second floor unfurnished, at the house of a land-agent, the rent he had to pay was very considerable, in proportion to his uncle's small allowance, but it was neither from vanity nor a love of luxury, that he incurred this expense. He well knew that if he desired fashionable men and women to sit to him for their pictures (the surest way for him at the commencement of his career to make money) he must assume, at least, the appearance of wealth, and risk the expense of a handsome apartment, in order to earn his daily bread. Genius is a power; but even genius, at the present day, needs the

aid of that greater power, money, to assure its success.

In every station of life, it is one of the happiest epochs, when the young first commence housekeeping for themselves. There is a pride and an exultation in the sense of power and independence which the first consciousness of being master of a house and home confers, however humble both may be, not to be surpassed by the future attainment of a palace.

Leonard Marston enjoyed this pleasure with almost boyish glee. His zest for simple comforts had not been palled and spoilt by an early surfeit of luxury; and every article of homely furniture he saw placed in his rooms, filled him with exultation, for he felt it was his own. He was all activity; all bustle; all energy; he did as much as two other men would have done, in the course of a day, in hanging and arranging the numerous pictures he then first unpacked, since his return; and when the workmen had all departed, he actually sat

down at his easel, and began to paint, in the last clear gleam of the bright spring evening. He could not wait till the morrow, to try the capital light in his new painting-room.

Then came an old woman he had engaged as his servant, with his tea ; and, need we blush to confess it, he actually forgot his art, to admire his own new cups and saucers.

Yes; good, warm-hearted Leonard ! admire them with all your soul ! It is the poetry of your own beautiful feelings which confers a charm and a worth on that blue crockery, which gilded Sevres does not possess for the spoilt child of luxury. Enjoy the elasticity of your own pure spirit, before the world crushes it with its leaden grasp ; before opinion robs the simple and the true of the freshness of their attractions. Such are the untarnished joys of childhood ; and happy they who can prolong them even to old age.

When the young artist's rooms were finally arranged ; and he sat in an easy

chair, and gazed around on his own works, with which the walls were covered, he had indeed just cause for honest exultation. Although he was still far from having arrived at that manual dexterity in the use of colours, to which even the greatest painters have only attained by long and patient toil; his pictures already possessed the charm of facility, truth of drawing, and purity of colouring; and were, above all, redolent of genius and imagination. They were not mere dead copies of flesh and blood, but the mind of the artist had inspired them as with a soul. All, who looked at them felt this, though many could not define the feeling, nor understand why they lingered on their memory, when others, perhaps of far higher reputation, were forgotten. But to Leonard, each picture was as a part of his own being. Each awoke exulting thoughts and bright imaginations, long past away; and yet with the pleasure, there was a touch of pain, for as his eye wandered from group

to group, and from feature to feature, he felt how far the execution fell short of the ideal he had striven to pourtray. He had no vanity—his perception of the beautiful was too just. He knew well how long and diligently he must labour, before he could express even his own thoughts. He knew that it was not by a mere assemblage of pretty forms, or colours, laid on by a skilful hand, that the lofty mission of the true artist can be fulfilled. He felt that it is not by a mere appeal to the senses that an artist performs his duty towards mankind ; but, that if his own soul be exalted, and purified by art and knowledge, he must strive to exalt and purify the souls of others, by the creations of his genius. His thoughts, therefore, must be worthy of a visible expression in painting, calculated to excite noble and generous aspirations in others, and then only could he be useful to his fellow-creatures, and a teacher in his generation.

He was endowed with the poet's feelings;

colour and form were his language. He was convinced, therefore, that he had not only to paint, but to study, to enlarge his knowledge of history and of man's moral nature, and of society. He wished to be no imitator. He was not ambitious to re-plunge into the obsolete forms and quaint, affected ignorance, or half-knowledge of the old German school, or of any age, whose feelings were obsolete. He wished to paint for the people, and the era in which he lived. He felt that art, like literature, must express and ennable the spirit of the existing generation ; it must be fresh, vigorous and original, and go before, rather than linger behind the time, if it is to retain and increase its spiritual power, by which alone it can be of utility. But all these ideas (which some of our readers think no doubt very high flown) were forgotten, as his eyes rested on a picture which hung somewhat in obscurity, it having been one of his first performances.

It was poor Kate D'Arcy's portrait, and as he looked at the fine and delicate face, the long black lashes of the downcast eyes, the dimples at the corners of her half-laughing mouth, and remembered how she sat blushing, half-delighted, and half-ashamed before him, the remembrance of his boyhood, and his sports in the old church-yard, with his young companion, came back like a vivid picture to his mind.

“Poor Kate,” he thought, “I wonder what has been your lot! We neither of us dreamt in those days, what struggles lay before us; and if I have found it difficult to pursue my way amidst the snares of corruption with honesty and purity, what must your struggles have been, poor child, with poverty to increase your danger.”

With this thought, the young painter lay down in his new bed, with a grateful heart for the comforts he possessed, with bright hopes for the future, and certain entrancing visions concerning a Roman

acquaintance, whom he expected to meet in London before long. On this point, all the wise advice of his uncle was already forgotten.

Marston pursued his way steadily and ardently. His mind was daily enlarged, his talents developed, and his health preserved, by his laborious, and well-regulated life ; and he felt, with all the energy of youth and health, that all he had yet produced in his art, was but an early trial of the strength that was in him. Happy in the unfettered exercise of his talents, and in the pursuit of a noble object, (albeit an artist is regarded by a fine gentleman as little above a mechanic) he had in his humble station no cause to envy the idle and dissipated loungers, in our army and universities, who possess, without labour, the honours of nobility, or the power of unbounded wealth. How many young men at his age, who are destined to take the highest places in aristocratical society, are morally, and physically ruined, by these

apparent advantages, and after passing a youth of vicious indulgence, or reckless debauchery and dissipation, drag on a vapid life of luxurious idleness, without stimulus, without hope, and without content.

The poor when they can obtain a just remuneration for their toil, have reason to pity, not envy, these miserable victims of disproportioned wealth, and the corruptions of old institutions.

CHAPTER VI.

What spirits were his, what wit, and what whim,
Now breaking a jest—
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball—
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all.

LEONARD had two pictures, which he destined for the Spring Exhibition at the National Gallery, and which he laboured hard to finish, before the time of sending in the works of art. But he did not meanwhile forget the D'Arcys, and he had one afternoon put aside his pencils, and prepared to go into the city once more in search of them, when his old servant

ushered a gentleman into his room, whom she announced as Mr. Cosway.

Leonard had met him frequently in society in Rome and Paris.

“ Ah, my dear fellow,” he exclaimed, as soon as the young painter had entered the outer drawing-room, “ delighted to see you. It is not my fault we have not met sooner. I need not tell you, I am an ardent admirer of genius!—are all your works arrived safe, and in good order?—busy, eh?—mean to exhibit, no doubt—quite right!—push your way—talent like yours must create a sensation. But you have a patron?—nothing can be done without a patron—talent is a drug till a great man passes his fiat on it—Ah! charming things, charming things, upon honour!” And Mr. Cosway, after surveying Leonard’s pictures on the easel through his eye-glass for a moment, continued to move round the room, with light and easy grace, asking his host a thousand questions, and leaving him no time to answer them.

“ But has merit no chance of success, in this great city, without a patron ? ” enquired Leonard, at length, when his visitor paused in a trance of admiration before the portrait of Gracia, a celebrated model, whom he remembered to have seen in Rome.

“ None, my dear fellow—none in the world—Raphael could sell nothing, unless he were the fashion. There is a rage for talking about art, and all that kind of thing, from the Court downwards; but take my word for it, not one person in ten thousand can distinguish what is clever, and what is not. But get a great patron to tell them you are a wonder, and echo will soon establish your fame. How can you expect that Mr. Jackson, who has made twenty-thousand a-year by cotton spinning, or Mr. Thomas, who receives ditto from his patent nails, or the Mr. Smiths, or Mr. Brown, who have all become enormously rich, nobody knows how, should have any more idea of a picture, than a milliner in

Cranbourne Alley, and yet all, when they have got a fine house, must have the walls covered with them."

"But cannot you help me to the protection, you think so indispensable?" demanded the artist, smiling.

"I help you, my good fellow! I should be glad to help myself. The pursuit of my life is a patron. A briefless barrister as I am, with certain tastes and habits, which make the law a bore, must get an office under government, or starve. Without a patron, his position is almost as bad as an unknown artist."

"That cannot be your case," answered his host, "you are connected with the Duke of Bellaney, who is now in the ministry, and ministers do not commonly forget their kindred, when places are to be disposed of."

"True, true, but ministers have also, commonly, a swarm of scions of their noble house, who assert a claim on their relationship," returned Cosway, smiling to

show his teeth. “I am only the grandson of a younger son of some former Duke, but still, I confess, I think it gives me a claim, particularly as I have missed no occasion of advocating the liberal measures of government. I have a claim, also, on the Home-office, and the Home-office feels it; I wrote a pamphlet, at a critical moment last year. It told. Upon my soul it turned the balance in favour of the ministers, or they must have retired.”

“I had no idea you were an author,” said Leonard, “or I should have made a point of reading your pamphlet.”

“I flatter myself it is remembered, and in fact, my dear fellow, I have reason to believe, that I am booked for a snug appointment, in one of those charming Commissions, which provide so delightfully for the zealous supporters of a liberal government. They are a most laudable invention, for upon my soul, how are we poor scions of a noble stock to maintain the respectability of our families, if we are not provided for, by the nation !”

"And I have no doubt the nation rejoices, in being taxed for such an object," returned the artist, laughing, "particularly the poor wretches, who pay double for their ounce of tea, and their pot of beer, in consequence."

"They don't feel it," answered Cosway, shrugging his shoulders. "But it is devilish hard upon us, who are brought up as scions of nobility, and compelled to live in single blessedness all our lives, because we cannot afford to keep a wife, in a manner suitable to our rank."

"Why don't you work?" demanded the artist gravely.

"I have worked?" was the reply. "Read hard at Cambridge, 'pon honour—but detest drudgery, detest law; genius scorns such trammels, and my pamphlet must make my fortune. Till then, I shall be happy, if I can assist in pushing yours. You knew people at Rome. You mean to call on them, I suppose?"

"I have called on several."

“Ah! visit not returned! I read it in your face. Mr. Marston, the artist, in London, a very different person from Mr. Marston, in Rome! the way of the world—of the great world. I cannot conceive why a handsome fellow like you, of respectable family, good education, and extraordinary general abilities, should lower himself in the scale of society, by adopting such a doubtful profession as that of an artist—which, plainly speaking, many people regard as little better than an upholsterer—a sort of fancy house painter. Artists are monstrously conceited, I know, and think great things of themselves, when they get an order from a crowned head, and so forth; but though it is an unpleasant truth to tell you, my dear fellow, they are not estimated in England, as men of real genius ought to be. There are only three professions, which give the position of a gentleman; the law, the church, and the army and navy.”

“If that were the opinion of all men of talent, the vast discoveries and marvellous

errections of modern times, would not have aided the civilization and comfort of mankind."

"Oh my dear Marston, if you mean to speak of engineers, and chemists, and those sort of people—I have only to say, they are notgentlemen. They are very clever, no doubt, and all that, but they belong to one another, they belong essentially to the people. They are utterly ignorant of the manners and feelings of good society."

"They want nothing from what you call good society, and deny its right to confer an order of merit," answered Leonard, whilst the blood mounted to his temples.

"But an artist does," answered Mr. Cosway, with a smile. "An artist works to please the fancy of a select few, not to supply the necessities of mankind; therefore, Mr. Marston, I am surprised, that with your proud spirit, you chose such a profession."

"I chose it as a means of giving expression to my thronging thoughts, with

the firm belief, that it may be directed to nobler aims than those to which you limit its influence."

"Oh, yes, no doubt; I quite understand," rejoined the careless barrister, laughing with negligent grace, "young enthusiasm, which would reform society, exalt the public feeling from material indulgences to spiritual grandeur, and all that: most young men feel and think thus, till they learn to know the world. But it is all nonsense, believe me. High aims—spiritual grandeur—soul-expression—mere humbug—cant! Iago's is the only true inspiration now a-days—put money in your purse; and for that, as I said before, you must have a patron. You know Lord Basset, I think?"

"Yes! He visited me frequently, in Rome. He returned my visit here, also."

"Ah! but he won't do—he is an amateur—talks about art like a parrot—and amateurs are too vain of their own works, to do justice to those of artists."

“I had a letter of introduction from a noble personage to the Marquis of Carville.”

“He is a miser—buys nothing but bargains—old trumpery painted up to be original—he will accept your presents of drawings, but order nothing.”

“I have been recommended to apply to Mr. Carstairs, an art dealer, who has the ear of many wealthy purchasers,” rejoined Leonard.

“Do that, if you are prepared to slip half the value of your picture into his hand, beforehand: otherwise it will stand in his drawing-room, with the face against the wall, till you bring it home again. No, no—no such patrons. I do not advise you to flatter, nor to bribe such people—the fair sex, charming creatures, will serve you better. You are a good-looking fellow, Marston—upon my soul you are—without flattery;” continued the light-hearted Cosway, casting a well satisfied glance at the full length reflection of his own carefully

attired person, in a swing mirror at the further end of the room, as he spoke, "you are out of the pale of matrimony, as much as such a poor devil of a younger brother as I am; so the women may admire and flirt with you with impunity. Flatter—flatter—don't spare soft looks—judicious compliments—they have done me much service. By the by, you know the Trentons; you were rather a favourite there, at Rome, if I remember right."

"Oh, yes, I know them well—very well I may say," returned Leonard, and he lifted up a picture, and carried it to the further end of the room.

"That is a good house! their beautiful ward and cousin came out in full splendour at the last drawing-room. She is pronounced the fashion, it being well known that she is heiress to Lady Trenton's estates. There is an admirable patroness for you—worth ten patrons. You must paint the fair Emily's portrait; make her as lovely as

an angel; get it well hung at the exhibition; and your future triumph is secure."

Mr. Cosway was so fully engaged in the contemplation of his own dear person, that he did not perceive the embarrassment of Leonard, when these names were mentioned, till at length, the young artist, perceiving he was unobserved, recovered his composure, and replied that he intended calling on Sir Charles Trenton, on the morrow.

"Why not to-day, my good fellow?" answered Cosway, starting up and looking at the elegant little watch in his waistcoat pocket. "You are prepared to go out, I see, and we have no time to lose, if we wish to find the ladies at home. Take your hat, and let us be off."

To this proposal, Leonard not only readily, but joyfully agreed. He had delayed this visit from a sort of nervous dread of going alone, which he had not felt on any other occasion; and the company of Mr. Cosway gave him peculiar satisfaction.

The thoughtless Barrister talked incessantly, during their walk; sometimes amusing the painter, by his witty sarcasms on society; at others, betraying unconsciously, the prejudices of his class; and whilst he professed liberality, and called himself an ardent friend of the people, and a popular administration, showing the utmost horror of all upstarts, and everything which his education had taught him to consider vulgar; vulgarity was worse in his eyes than crime; and, to do him justice, it was not the mere vulgarity of manners, but the vulgarity of soul, from which he shrunk with abhorrence. Money gave no man value in his eyes, whatever rank might do—neither did he despise any man because he was poor. Manners, and certain modes of thought and habits of feeling had the greatest worth in his estimation; and yet, after all, he judged men by the prejudices of a class, and a very exclusive class, not by the just views of a wise philanthropy, or philosophy. He was fully persuaded that

he belonged to the *élite* of society—to the privileged people, who are born great; and he had not the slightest doubt of the extreme liberality of his views. He was good-natured, vain, inquisitive, and busy; incapable of great things, but restlessly active in little ones, and it was in many respects fortunate for Marston, that he had taken him under his protection, for it flattered his vanity to be acquainted with authors and artists of distinguished talents; and wherever he dined that season, it was certain he would never fail to give himself the air of a patron, by talking of his friend Marston—a young artist of extraordinary genius—good family—received in the best society, &c., and other accessories, which, however, they may be despised by great minds, are very necessary to bring genius into favour with that little clique, which calls itself the fashionable world.

CHAPTER VII.

Young, ardent soul, grac'd with fair Nature's truth,
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,
And still a large, late love of all thy kind,
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
Thine eyes with tears.

HOOD.

WHEN Mr. Cosway and Leonard Marston entered the drawing-room of Lady Trenton in Park Lane, they found a young lady there alone, sitting drawing at a small table in the recess of a bow-window, nearly surrounded by flowering shrubs. As she arose to receive them, she cast a

timid and hasty glance at Marston, but her eyes were withdrawn, almost as soon as she met his ardent gaze, and she first shook hands with Mr. Cosway, before she returned the salutation of the artist, in a somewhat more embarrassed manner.

“I rejoice that we are so fortunate as to find you at home,” said Cosway, “for I have talked to Marston so much about the beautiful sketches you made on your way home from Italy, that he is impatient to admire them.”

“Mr. Marston is too much conversant with works of real merit, to find any pleasure in my poor efforts, and understands your talent for compliment too well, to be deceived by it,” replied the young lady, laughing, and again glancing at the artist.

“Pardon me,” returned Leonard, “but I have already seen too many of your drawings in Rome, to doubt Mr. Cosway’s commendations of your more recent works. Will you allow me to look at that with which you are now engaged?”

“With pleasure,” answered Miss Cartington, and with perfect simplicity, she uncovered the drawing. It was a single figure of a child drinking at a well, and so prettily executed, that, as Marston assured her, even an artist might admire it without flattery.

She raised her eyes to his face, to observe its expression, whilst he examined her work, before she believed his words. What she saw there, apparently satisfied her, for she then replied, that she was proud of having the approbation of so competent a judge, and with a bright smile she took the drawing from Marston’s hands, and laid it aside.

“Now let me enquire,” she said, “how long you have been in London—how you left all our friends in Rome, and talk about a hundred things of more worth than my poor labours? Ever since I heard you had returned, I have been plaguing Lady Trenton to bring me to see your pictures,

for I hear you have brought superb works for the Exhibition."

"I should have been greatly flattered by your visit," said Marston bowing slightly.

"Oh, yes ! I shall come, certainly," continued Miss Carrington. "Lady Trenton is very angry with me, that I am so mad about art."

"I fancied she pretended to taste, when she was in Italy," rejoined Cosway, laughing ; "but a little taste for art goes a great way in London—you will soon discover that, Marston."

"Oh, yes ; people have not time for it," returned the young lady. "They are too busy with visiting and fashion—and fashion and good taste, you know, are often far divided. Lady Trenton is always in the fashion."

"Then I must not expect that she will call on me in my unfashionable dwelling," answered Leonard.

"Oh, yes, if you are talked about ! You

must go to the Marquis of Norwood's parties—you must get an invitation to Lady Charlotte Delmar's select *soireès*—and then she will visit and invite you, for she only follows, she does not make the fashion. I think I can manage the latter for you ; she was my mother's cousin, and calls me her spoilt child. She shall positively send you a card, or, with your permission, I will persuade her to bring me to see your pictures."

"That is an excellent idea, Miss Carrington," said Cosway. "Marston must positively be the fashion—and let me insinuate that the surest way to make him so, is to let him paint your portrait. It would be certain of a good place at the Exhibition, and his fortune would be made at once."

"Mr. Marston has been accustomed to paint from such perfect models, I should feel quite nervous to sit to him," answered the girl, looking up with an arch and captivating smile, and though slightly em-

barrassed herself, evidently enjoying the idea.

“I have never had the pleasure of painting any model so charming, both in colour and expression,” answered the young artist, and his countenance, even more than his words, betrayed his admiration of the beautiful creature before him.

Miss Carrington laughed. She was so accustomed to be admired—she was so accustomed to please—to fascinate—that it was her highest pleasure to be assured of being charming.

By nature, she was of a sweet, tender, affectionate character, delighting to be loved; and a certain portion of vanity and coquetry, which had been cherished by the flattery of all who approached her, though they gradually corroded the purity of her heart, added an irresistible fascination to her manner. She was arch without affectation, and playful without silliness. But though Marston admired her beauty, and

her manners, the charm by which she most attracted him, was her warm, genuine, and unsophisticated admiration for all that was beautiful, and generous, and true.

She was only nineteen ; she had not yet become the slave of society, and she was yet impatient of the trammels of station and appearances, with which its votaries are enslaved, to the utter destruction of all pure and genuine feeling. She was not yet so proud as many others would have been in her position. She was rich, and had great expectations—she believed she was charming, and she yet delighted to be followed, and flattered by handsome and agreeable men, without considering, as a portionless girl might have done, whether they were eligible matches, or not. She admired talent by an instinct of her nature.

She had always met Leonard Marston in good society, she thought him very handsome—his uncompromising independence of spirit gave him a certain influence,

which she felt without seeking to analyse it, and a glance, or a word of admiration from him had, during the latter weeks of her residence at Rome, been of much more value to her, than all the extravagant flattery of her more wealthy admirers. She had impatiently expected his visit in London, and when in his presence that morning, she had never, in her life, felt more anxious to please.

A certain coldness, and almost reserve in the manner of the painter towards her, seemed to pique her to exert her utmost abilities to shine in her conversation with Cosway, in which, for a time, Leonard took little part. Cosway was delighted, both with her and with himself; he began to think he had made a conquest, and he more than once glanced at an opposite mirror, and looked down with complacency on his exquisite tight boots, in which he was suffering agony.

He little knew that Miss Carrington, who had a fine perception of the ridiculous, if she had then thought of him at all, would

have been more inclined to quiz him, than to admire ; but while she talked to him, her whole mind was engaged by Leonard Marston, and it was him alone whom she desired to please.

By degrees she drew him on, to take also an animated share in the conversation, and then she listened with the most pleased and flattering attention.

Half-an-hour thus passed away, during which she was as perfectly and thoughtlessly happy, as a child who has obtained a toy it had long ardently desired to possess ; and under the influence of such feelings, her beauty and manners were so irresistibly charming, that Leonard himself forgot the gulf whlch divided the fashionable heiress, from the poor and almost unknown artist, and was scarcely less happy and unreserved than she was.

One of her arts of pleasing was to draw out the powers of those with whom she conversed, and to make them satisfied with themselves, by exciting them to the full

and open expression of their thoughts, and the inspiration of their genius. In such conversation, Marston felt, that he was not unworthy of her, and that to win the love of a being so charming, was worth the labour of a life.

He was dazzled and excited, and like one who has gazed on the sun, nothing but brightness was for a while before his eyes.

The entrance of Sir Charles Trenton first interrupted the conversation of this happy little party.

The guardian, and cousin by marriage, of Miss Carrington, was a man about forty years of age, tall, well-proportioned, and still handsome. There was something not always pleasing in the expression of his finely cut features, and dark eyes. His presence threw a sudden chill over the whole party, yet he smiled very blandly as he held out his hand to Cosway, and with great politeness, expressed his pleasure at seeing Mr. Marston in London.

“Emily,” he then said, to Miss Carrington, “where is Lady Trenton? I understood she intended to remain at home to-day.”

“She suddenly remembered some purchases she had to make,” was the careless reply, and the young lady arose and walked towards the window.

Cosway, after exchanging a few short sentences about the weather, and the approaching session of Parliament, with Sir Charles, now took his leave, and Marston followed his example.

Miss Carrington wished them good morning, without advancing more than a few steps from the window; a strange reserve had suddenly replaced her former cheerfulness. Sir Charles, on the contrary, was more friendly than before, assured Marston he should soon come to look at his works, and hoped he should have the pleasure of seeing him to dinner, before long. But no sooner had the drawing-

room door closed upon his visitors, than his smiles disappeared, and advancing close to his ward, who had resumed her painting, he drew a chair, and sat down close at her side.

“ Emily !” he said, in a soft and penetrating voice, whilst his eyes wandered over the beautiful creature at his side with an expression that would have terrified her, had she seen, or understood it, “ I think I have expressed my opinion to you already about your receiving the visits of gentlemen, when you are alone !”

Emily made no reply.

“ I have spoken to you, as I would speak to a sister. I understand the world better than you do, and I have no wish, but to guard you, as I would a precious treasure confided to my care.”

“ You had better put me under lock and key,” replied the girl, looking up with a mischievous glance in his face.

The strange look had passed from his

eyes, and she only saw a smile of tender indulgence, as he replied, in a low, thrilling voice :

“ Perhaps I should be very glad to do so.”

“ I am much obliged to you,” answered Emily, blushing, she knew not wherefore ; “ but I am not in Turkey. I prefer the enjoyment of agreeable society, whenever I have an opportunity.”

“ Gentlemen’s society,” responded Trenton, with a marked emphasis. “ Take care, Emily, take care ! I would not have you become a theme for light tongues, whilst you are my ward, for anything the world could offer me.”

“ Of that, sir, I trust there is no danger ; except the scandal originates with yourself,” said Emily, with a haughty indignation, which altered the expression of her whole person.

Trenton was surprised, and for a moment regarded her with silent admiration, till her

flashing eyes sunk beneath his glance. He then laughed.

“ No, no, dear Emily, you know very well I love you too tenderly to breathe a word to your disadvantage,” he said. “ Were you my own daughter, I could not be more fondly attached to you ; and it is that love, which makes me brave your anger, by speaking plainly, when I see anything in your conduct of which I do not entirely approve. You are too innocent—too confiding ; you treat the worthless moths, who flutter round the brightness of your beauty —(and pardon me—the lustre of your fortune likewise has its attractions)—you treat these vain fools with too much indulgence —too much good nature. They believe you encourage them, and they boast of your favour. They lay wagers which shall win you before the end of the season—they put off their debtors with hopes of your fortune ! You must confess, Emily, that as your guardian, and your friend, I

have a right to be pained, grieved—annoyed when I hear such stories."

"It is all the women's envy," answered the girl, laughing carelessly. "They wish to have it understood, that I am worthy of no attention from the men, except for my money. But you must forgive me, Sir Charles, I have a little vanity, and I don't quite believe the whole of these stories."

"But you may believe me," returned the baronet. "In all things you may believe me."

"Sometimes, perhaps, when it suits me," answered Emily, but without looking up.

"I confess such truths are not agreeable," pursued her guardian; "when, therefore, I compel myself to utter them, you ought the more readily to believe them; as you must be sure, that no one is less inclined than myself to give you pain. But I cannot forget, Emily, that I am your guardian."

"I cannot imagine what makes you think

it necessary, to speak to me in this earnest manner, at present," returned the girl, with evident annoyance.

"I was vexed to find that Cosway had been here, during Lady Trenton's absence, more than an hour," said Sir Charles,

"Oh, surely you cannot pretend to think that my heart is in any danger there," was Emily's laughing reply.

"He is proud—founds pretensions on his family—and pretensions on his talents; he is in want of fortune, and evidently believes that you admire him exceedingly. It is dangerous to go too far with such a man."

"I am very sorry, if his vanity is so great; but he will find out his mistake before long, no doubt; and you may talk of prudence for a month, Sir Charles, but I cannot help listening to him, and smiling, perhaps he thinks, graciously; but his foibles amuse me; I am entertained by his conversation, and under no constraint in

his company. He is just the very person with whom the idea of marriage never comes into my head."

"With you very probably, but with him it may be quite the contrary. There is exactly the mistake of which I wish to make you aware."

"Oh, I have no wish, nor intention to become a prude, Sir Charles," replied Miss Carrington, more seriously, than she had before spoken.

"My only object in life, at present, is amusement; but with your prudent precautions, and foregone conclusions, there would be an end of all light heartedness and unconstraint. Have more confidence in my discretion and modesty. I trust my dearest mother lived long enough to instruct her daughter, not to disgrace the family from which she springs. I am not so much a child as you seem to suppose, and well know how to maintain the proper dignity of my sex and station, when necessary."

“ Still, Emily,” persisted Sir Charles, “ I must repeat, that it is not my wish, that you should receive young men about town alone.”

“ Mr. Cosway was not alone,” replied Emily, slightly blushing.

“ Ah, you mean that young fellow, Marston, was with him,” said her guardian. “ So much the worse ; it was evident he brought him merely as an excuse for repeating his visit so quickly. But now I have told you my opinion on this subject, let us speak of something else. Did Cosway leave his companion time to tell you if he had any pictures for the Exhibition ?”

“ Yes, three,” replied Emily, resuming her drawing with the utmost diligence.

“ The young fellow has talent,” added Sir Charles, “ and good introductions. If he become the fashion, which I have no doubt will be the case, his works, before the end of the season, will bring double the price he can ask at present. The walls of

the green drawing-room at Trenton Hall sadly lack covering, and I am greatly inclined to ask him down into the country with us, to paint two large pictures."

"Your reputation for taste, would render such an order of great advantage to him, at the commencement of his career," said Emily.

"Perhaps so! but I hope your judgment does not differ from mine, in this case, otherwise, I should beg you to select some one else for the work."

"No doubt Mr. Marston has talent," she coldly replied, "but do as you please, for it is impossible that my opinion can have any weight with a connoisseur like Sir Charles Trenton."

"Emily! Emily! will you never place any confidence in my assurances," murmured the baronet in a mortified tone, and then turned away from her, and walked impatiently up and down the room.

Miss Carrington was so annoyed, by

the contemptuous impertinence with which Sir Charles had spoken of employing Marston, that she resolved not to give him the slightest hint of her intention of sitting to him for her portrait. She knew that an artist, in his estimation, was rated no higher than a house decorator, and though, whatever might be her usual modes of thought on the subject, she at present made an exception in Leonard's favour, she had not the courage to dispute the point; she had not courage to express her enthusiastic admiration for the genius and high poetic feeling and independent character of the painter, which, she felt, would only have excited the ridicule of her guardian. She was herself, perhaps, in some measure, ashamed of it. It is difficult for the most generous and innocent heart, when in daily association with the proud and rich and great, to maintain its respect for genius and nobility of soul, when not sanctioned by their admiration.

The conversation was now interrupted, by the entrance of Lady Trenton.

She was a delicate looking woman, about three or four and thirty, whom Sir Charles had married, for her money and good family. She had soon discovered that her passionate attachment to him was unreturned; and she sought to forget the anguish and weariness of her heart, in the distractions of society. But, whilst she was outwardly the devotee of fashion, her health was ruined and her life rapidly wasting away, under the consciousness of her husband's indifference, and the bitter pangs of secret jealousy.

A new cause of uneasiness had been added to those by which she had been long afflicted, when her cousin and heiress, Emily Carrington, had, about a twelve-month before, been left to her husband's guardianship, and became an inmate of their dwelling. She loved the girl for her affectionate and artless nature, in which it was impossible for the eye, even of a jealous

wife to detect the slightest cause for suspicion. But the manner of Sir Charles towards his ward, had latterly given her much pain. She could scarcely define to herself, in what way it was displeasing to her; and yet she felt that it betrayed feelings on his part, very different from the fatherly solicitude of which he made open profession. The blood suddenly mounted to her pale face, when, on her return from her drive, she found them in the drawing-room alone together. Yet she came forward, and held out her hand, with a smile, to her husband, whom she saw, that morning, for the first time.

He was too high-bred to fail in the slightest mark of politeness towards her; yet his quick eye had marked her hurried glance and blush, on her entrance, and well knew the cause.

“I came up to ask you, if you intend going to Lady Carter’s this evening?” he said, with careless grace. “By the by, I found Cosway here, and I have been giving

our ward a lecture, on the frequency of his visits."

"He is so far from being a favourite with Miss Carrington, that there is little necessity for your taking that trouble," said the lady, very coldly, and she seated herself at an embroidery frame, and began to work very industriously, without uttering another syllable.

Sir Charles stood with his back to the chimney, appearing to busy himself with his nails; till, pretending suddenly to recollect an engagement, he hastily left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes
How diversely love doth his pageants play,
And shows his power in variable kinds...
In brave sprite it kindles goodly fire
That to all high desire and honour doth aspire

SPENSER.

THE breaking down of the old system of monopoly and favouritism had already extended its influence to the arts, when Leonard Marston began his career.

The decoration of a public building, instead of being kept by interest, in the hands of a favoured few, was thrown open for general competition. Cartoons were to be sent in for exhibition and selected anonymously, and the prizes were to be awarded, before the names of the artists

were disclosed to the committee of judgment.

Marston ardently seized this opportunity of proving the extent of his abilities, and zealously worked in secret, at a composition, in which, for the first time, he found full scope for his genius. His correct knowledge of anatomy, and strong recollection of form, united with the maturity of his thoughts, and his vivacity of imagination, enabled him to proceed with extreme rapidity, and his cartoon was finished and sent to its place of destination, before the opening of the academy. With one voice the judges pronounced it worthy of the first prize, and the surprise was universal, when, on opening the letter of the artist, it was found to be the production of a painter, whose name was almost unknown.

Two days afterwards, Leonard was called from his easel, to receive a gentleman, whom his old servant said, was looking at his pictures in the front room,

and had inquired for him. He had given no name she said. Though annoyed by the interruption, he at once laid his pencils aside, and proceeded to meet his visitor.

He found a little, thin, elderly gentleman, so attentively examining one of his pictures through an eye-glass, that he appeared, at first, unconscious of the entrance of the artist.

But as Leonard approached, he turned suddenly round, regarded him with a scrutinizing glance, and slightly bowed.

“Mr. Marston, I presume,” he said in a very mild voice.

The painter was at once struck by the noble forehead, and the intellectual and benevolent expression of the thin, wrinkled face of his visitor.

He returned his salutation with a feeling of involuntary respect.

“I fear I have disturbed you,” said the old gentleman mildly, “but you would excuse me if you knew the gratification I feel in making the acquaintance of the

artist who has executed such works as I am now admiring."

" You are polite, and indulgent," said Leonard modestly. " Could I have given the form I wished to my ideas, I might perhaps have merited your praise; but I feel with sorrow how incompletely I have done so."

" Yet it is exactly the ideas which these pictures express, which most please me," said the old gentleman. " You love your fellow creatures, and pity their sufferings, young man, or you could not have produced such paintings. Your mind has a different bias, and your thoughts are of a different character, from those of the hacknied young men, who, vain of their talents, regard them only as a means of making money, by flattering the pampered fancies of luxurious ignorance. You seem to know the world in an extraordinary manner for your age, and the feelings of man in every station."

" I have seen something of the sufferings

poor, as well as of the pastimes of the rich," answered Leonard, glancing at the picture of poor Kate, and thinking of his boyhood, "and I am persuaded that the time has come when all art and literature ought to be employed to arouse the upper classes to an active sense of their duties, towards their less fortunate fellow creatures."

"I am rather of opinion," answered the old man, smiling on his youthful companion, "that it is now the business of art, to elevate the working classes in the moral scale of social life—to give them the power of knowledge—to teach them to use it by association for the advancement of their material interests and moral progress. The people must be raised ; amidst them is the strength and intellect found, which maintains the greatness of the nation, and progresses in spite of the aristocracy, which, were it not recruited from the lower ranks, would be in time, utterly enfeebled by idleness and luxury. But the people are now aware that gold, and knowledge, and

virtue, make the only distinctions between man and man—the soul of the nation is expanding like a lotus on the face of the waters. It is no longer a select few, but the people, as in the old republics of Greece, who are to be addressed by literature and art. The writer and the artist have thus a fresh and vigorous public; whilst new worlds of thoughts and feelings are opened to their use. You have felt this, and your works have, therefore, the merit of originality and vigour. Even that girl's head, you have hung so far in the shade, is very different from the trumpery beauties which disgrace our Albums. It tells a story of poverty and suffering; it is full of nature and character; there is evidently a noble soul within, which gives a bright intelligence to the eyes and forehead, though the mouth smiles so sadly. It is a young work, Mr. Marston, that is evident. You were yourself, perhaps, scarcely aware what your work expressed!"

"It is a portrait," answered Leonard, simply.

The door was at this moment thrown open, and the Marquis of Carville was announced.

The old gentleman immediately withdrew to the further end of the room, and turning to examine a picture, left Leonard at liberty to receive his new guest.

The manner of the Marquis toward the artist was very different from that of the old gentleman. It was courteous ; but it was the courteous condescension of a superior, who thinks it his duty to set an inferior at his ease.

The old gentleman, though he did not look round, felt, as quickly as Leonard Marston himself, the impertinence of the man of fashion and rank. He smiled internally at the weakness of human nature, and the false value which the distinctions of modern society confer upon men.

The Marquis looked at Marston's finished

pictures with an air of elegant indifference, and then, with his glass at his eye, glanced round the walls, as if he had seen so many fine things in his life, that one look sufficed to convince him that there was nothing there worth observing. He then began to criticise the picture on the easel, and having shown his own taste by proving it full of faults, he enquired if it were sold, and when Leonard answered in the negative, demanded the price.

The old gentleman listened acutely, as Marston replied, that the picture had been valued, by a Connoisseur, at eighty guineas.

“I am sorry to hear it,” said the Marquis, raising his shoulders. “It is often the fault of such injudicious friends, that the works of young artists remain upon their hands. They forget that merit alone cannot command such prices, without an established reputation. Fifty guineas, Mr. Marston, I could have offered you. You must excuse me, if I remind you, we are

no longer in Rome. You have your way to make against an enormous competition, and time and practice are necessary, to mature the brightest genius. May I presume that the picture is mine for fifty guineas?"

The heart of Leonard, for the first time in his life, swelled with the honest indignation of insulted pride, as the nobleman thus addressed him ; but he remembered his uncle's warnings, and mastered his indignation, so far as to be able to reply with apparent composure, that he could not give the picture for less than the price he had named.

" My dear sir, you make a mistake," returned the Marquis, " with fifty guineas the thing is well paid ; as your friend, I assure you, it is not worth more. It betrays genius, certainly ; but both in colouring and drawing, there is much to criticise. Unfortunately, friends, in general, are more apt to flatter, than to tell judicious truths. Think again, Mr. Marston,

and if you decide to take fifty guineas, I will, at once, order two others of a similar size, of which I leave to you the choice of the subject."

"I am very sorry, my lord," returned the artist, in a quiet, but most decided tone, "I can neither dispose of this picture at such a price, nor accept your order. You are, apparently, not aware of the thought and labour necessary for the creation of such works. I have named the lowest price, and by that I must abide."

"Three pictures, Mr. Marston?"

"I would not change my decision, were you to order a dozen, my lord!"

"Should you be induced hereafter to do so, I trust you will let me know," said the Marquis, and he sauntered away to examine a copy of a Raphael, near the window.

He felt fully convinced that the young artist was only endeavouring to make the

best bargain in his power, and would before he allowed him to leave the house finally agree to accept the price he had offered, although he well knew that even what Marston had asked was far beneath the real worth of the picture. He had quite overlooked the old gentleman at the further end of the room, and whilst pretending to examine a Madonna, hung against the wall, he was greatly surprised to hear a soft voice behind him, say—

“Eighty guineas, I think you said, was your price, Mr. Marston?”

“Eighty guineas!” repeated Leonard, somewhat abruptly, for he was still smarting under the insolence of the noble connoisseur, and was annoyed at the idea of bargaining for the sale of works, in the creation of which all the highest feelings of his soul had been excited and employed.

He then first really learnt that genius is not all the artist requires to secure his

success in life, but that to struggle with less gifted men he must be a man of business.

The old gentleman seemed perfectly to understand what was passing in his mind, for he smiled benevolently at him, as he replied—

“ Then the picture is mine. After the Exhibition, you will send it to me, and I shall be obliged if you will devote your first leisure, to paint me a companion to it. Your time will, for the future, be of more value than it has hitherto been ; you will allow me to pay you a hundred guineas for the second.”

“ That I cannot accept,” said Leonard, earnestly. “ I should be sorry to take advantage of your generosity, and I am satisfied with the price I have demanded.”

“ That is my affair. I will write you an order on my banker, to be drawn at sight.”

And the old gentleman, after writing at a side table, in a small book he took from

his pocket, tore out a leaf, and put it into the artist's hand.

"I hope we shall very shortly meet again, Mr. Marston," he said, "I wish you a very good morning," and without taking the slightest notice of the Marquis, he then left the room.

The nobleman was in utter astonishment, and mortified beyond expression. He felt that he had exposed himself, and incurred the contempt of the stranger, whoever he might be ; worse than that, he had lost the bargain he anticipated, for under a hundred guineas he could no longer expect that he could obtain the pictures he had resolved to have for fifty. Yet concealing his vexation under an air of indifference, he was mean enough to ask Leonard the name of his patron.

Marston replied that he was himself ignorant of it.

"Some dealer, I presume, by his appearance," said Lord Carville, with a sneer. "Those people will make any temporary

sacrifice to keep up prices, and make us pay."

Leonard looked at the paper the old gentleman had given him. It was an order on a city banker for two hundred guineas, signed, Charles Westbrook.

"Good heavens! is it possible?" exclaimed the Marquis, when he heard the name. "The vulgar, purse-proud, old fellow! He has the finest gallery of modern art in England, and it is strange I never met him before to my knowledge. These fellows, who have made money by trade, have so few wants, and no station to maintain, that they can well afford to pay better than we can, and it is clear, his vanity was piqued, and he was resolved not to allow me to have your pictures. But don't be deluded—it is only a combination of accidents, and I have no doubt, before long, you will let me have something at a reasonable price. I came this morning, it appears, just half an hour too late."

He then, with ill-concealed anger, abruptly took his leave.

The pain which he had inflicted on Marston, was entirely obliterated by the noble conduct of Mr. Westbrook, and when the artist was left alone, he thought only of the benevolent old man, and the generous kindness with which he had so promptly come to his aid. He was grateful to him, beyond expression, not for the money alone, he had so nobly advanced, though that was of great importance to him at the commencement of his London life ; but he was grateful for his sympathy, and for the proofs he had given, that whilst he admired art, he did not despise the artist, but had rejoiced to give a reproof to the impertinent presumption of nobility, which he was himself disabled, by his position, from resenting. The happy consciousness, that his genius was understood and estimated, gave him new inspiration, and carried away by his own enthusiasm, he

quickly forgot all the pains which the artificial slavery of social life is capable of inflicting.

But not for long. Although the visit of the Marquis of Carville had caused Leonard bitter mortification, it had a salutary effect on his mind, when he had time for more mature reflection.

The fancies, which he had very foolishly begun to indulge, concerning Emily Carrington, were, for the time, dispelled. The Marquis had made him feel, that though he had been admitted into the house of Sir Charles Trenton at Rome, they belonged to a totally different class of society in England ; and his first resolution was, to avoid altogether the company of fine people, where, even though he were tolerated, he was secretly despised. He very valiantly determined to work out, by his industry and talent, a place for himself in society, which must command even their respect. Poor young man !—he little knew, that none of these great people would ever care more

about him, nor his reputation, than as one who, by the works of his hands, administered to their pleasure, or their vanity.

He from time to time sought distraction and amusement in the society of other artists and celebrated authors of the day; and with a select few, whose minds were as expansive, and whose principles were as humane and independent as his own, he enjoyed the high pleasure of unconstrained mental intercourse. These were men conscious of their high mission, and resolved to aid the progress of man towards universal civilization, equality of education and political rights, and adequate remuneration for labour, with the whole strength of the talents which Heaven had conferred on them. The false halo of rank and wealth, gave no deceptive dimensions in their eyes, to the proud littleness, which the institutions of past ages, and the prejudices of the present, had contributed to endow with conventional importance; and relying on their own powers, and their own noble

aims, they did not make art subservient to the pleasure of the great ; but appealed to the people for inspiration, and for sympathy. But Leonard Marston grieved to see, that many others, brought up in servile admiration of all above them, devoid of all respect for the dignity of their art, crouched with fawning servility before all whom they considered either fashionable or great, and seemed actually to feel, as if their aristocratic patrons were beings of a different race, whose notice alone conferred real honour, whose judgments were infallible, and whose patronage was the summit of ambition. Such men despise all as if beneath them, who are unhonoured by the favour of the great ; yet these sycophants of a Court, these creatures of a monarchy, are, when revolutions disturb their fountains of gain, the first to turn, and revenge their former humiliation, by wreaking a bitter vengeance, on the very class which they formerly worshipped.

But Marston soon found that these are

commonly no true sons of genius ; they have a certain portion of talent, but are deficient in that grasp of mind, which alone confers immortality ; class literature, and class art, fostered by fashion, and cherished by luxury, have never survived their century.

But much as the young painter's inclination prompted him to keep aloof from fashionable society, his profession did not leave him at liberty to withdraw himself from what is called the world.

In the height of the season, whilst he was one afternoon busily occupied, the silence of his apartment was suddenly interrupted by a tremendous knock at the house-door, and a few minutes afterwards Miss Carrington glided into his painting-room, followed by a little, thin, elderly lady, whom she presented to him as Lady Charlotte Delmar.

The old lady was slightly deformed, and her dark complexion nearly hidden by rouge, so thickly laid on, that it re-

sembled two red patches on her withered cheeks, whilst her large, gipsy eyes burnt above it, with the fire of keen, strong intellect and wit, which even the dissipation of her long life had nourished, not quenched. She was an old maid of quality, who, though she had been a great flirt, had, in consequence of pride and family pretensions, failed to make a bargain in the market of matrimony, and struggling through life alone, was condemned to maintain her becoming position in society, with infinite difficulty, no one exactly knew how, on a very small income.

Had she been usefully and morally educated, and taught to pursue a noble aim in life, or had poverty compelled her to earn her bread by the honourable exercise of her talents, she would, no doubt, have been a woman of distinguished abilities, and respectable conduct ; but as it was, she was only a petty and dangerous intriguer for vain notoriety, for paltry in-

terests, and vapid amusements ; nothing but her powers of sarcasm, prevented her juvenile airs being ridiculous. She had two weapons of attack and defence, flattery and insolence, and as best suited her purpose, she made use of these unsparingly. She professed an enthusiastic fondness for young people ; to make her house agreeable to them, appeared the dearest object of her life, and her success was so complete, that an appearance at her *soirées*, was as necessary to establish the fashion of a young beauty as an introduction at Almacks.

She had her secret reasons for giving herself so much trouble, which were far from being so benevolent, as she wished the world to believe, though most people regarded her as a good-natured, clever, busy old woman, and nothing more.

Emily Carrington had too much pleasure in being loved, and was too much accustomed to flattery, to doubt the truth of Lady Charlotte's warmly expressed affec-

tion and admiration. No confidence existed between her and Lady Trenton, and she had no other female relatives to whom she could turn for advice and support in the trying circumstances attending the entrance of a young and beautiful heiress into life. Lady Charlotte might at first sight have appeared little calculated to supply these deficiencies, but the jealousy of Lady Trenton aided her schemes, and before the end of a few months, the wily old woman had completely established her power over the unsuspecting Emily.

She had listened with extreme interest to the girl's account of Leonard Marston, and as she liked to be surrounded by clever young men, and to have the drawings of distinguished artists in her album, without paying for them, she agreed to visit him, that she might ascertain, by her own keen observation, whether, or not, he was worthy of her valuable patronage.

Marston's heart beat violently, when Miss Carrington, so unexpectedly, entered

his painting-room, and advancing towards him, after she had presented her friend, held out her small hand to shake hands with him, as an old acquaintance.

Lady Charlotte saw his embarrassment, and immediately began to chatter.

“ My dear friend, Miss Carrington, has told me so much of Mr. Marston’s abilities,” she began, “ that I have been quite impatient to make his acquaintance.”

“ Miss Carrington has done me too much honour,” said the artist, looking with grateful admiration at Emily.

“ Not at all!—not at all!” cried Lady Charlotte ; “ her praises are fully justified by the works I see around me. That finished picture, I presume is for Exhibition ? I hope it may be hung as it deserves, and you may be assured I will do everything in my power to recommend you purchasers.”

“ It is already sold,” returned Leonard, quietly.

“ Indeed! you are fortunate,” she re-

plied. "To some family friend, I presume."

"To Mr. Westbrook!"

"What! the great collector?" demanded the old lady, with an expression of astonishment, as she, for the first time, raised her glass, and examined the picture, at which she had previously scarcely glanced.

"Admirable, indeed," she murmured. "Fifty guineas, I presume, as a beginner. At that price, you will be sure of orders, when Mr. Westbrook's name transpires as a purchaser. A lucky hit, Mr. Marston."

"Mr. Westbrook has already paid me two hundred guineas for that, and a companion picture, he has desired me to paint for him," said the artist.

Lady Charlotte was, for a moment, provoked to find that her patronage was so little wanted—but Leonard Marston, at the same time, became a very different person in her estimation. The patronage of the well-known connoisseur, Mr. Westbrook, at

once convinced her, that his talents were above mediocrity—that he was worthy of some attention—that he might be admitted, without danger, into her select society as a rising young man of talent—and that there was no danger of her judgment being compromised, should she honour him with her protection.

All this passed quickly through her mind, whilst Emily was exchanging a few lowly spoken words with Marston, concerning the sketches which she had remembered to have previously seen ; and he complimented her in turn, on her excellent memory.

“ Ah ! those were happy days,” said the girl. “ I am sure you must regret Rome, Mr. Marston, in this foggy city.”

“ I regret it on many accounts.” he replied, without looking up.

“ It must, indeed, possess a thousand charms for a man of your taste,” rejoined the lady.

“ It had, indeed, many charms,” was the

soft reply, and Marston, who stood close at Emily's side, fixed his large, earnest, penetrating eyes, for a moment, on her beautiful, animated face.

She did not meet the glance, or perhaps she might not have proceeded with unchanging gaiety.

“Do you remember our visit by torch-light to the Colosseum, when we lost our party in the gigantic building, and our walk to the lovely fountain of Egeria? I have the sketch you made me amongst my choicest treasures.”

“And I—” began Marston, whilst an expression of extraordinary emotion passed over his fine face; but the sentence was not concluded, and he turned away to place a picture in a more advantageous position.

Lady Charlotte remarked that his hand trembled as he did so. The keen old intriguer had not lost a word of the young people's conversation, and she had rapidly drawn her own conclusions from it. She

considered it high time to interrupt them, for the present, at least.

“ My dear child,” she said, to Miss Carrington, “ we are intruding on Mr. Marston’s valuable time, without informing him of the object of our visit.”

“ We are old friends,” answered Emily, glancing with a captivating smile at the painter. “ I know by experience Mr. Marston’s colours do not dry very quickly.”

“ He is very good to have so much patience,” answered the old lady.

“ I beg you to believe, that I am happy to be so delightfully interrupted,” said the artist, with infinite courtesy.

“ You are very good ; but we are really not so inconsiderate, as we appear. Miss Carrington will explain to you, that she is anxious to have her portrait painted by you, for the ensuing Exhibition, if you have still sufficient time at your disposal.”

“ I shall be delighted—charmed,” replied Leonard, with rather more animation than it was necessary for him, as an artist,

to express, but in another moment, as if conscious of his mistake, and of the feelings he had betrayed, he assumed a reserved coldness of manner, and added, that the time was certainly very short ; but that every other work must give place to such a command, and that if Miss Carrington would have the kindness to grant him frequent sittings, he doubted not he should be able to finish the picture in time.

“ Oh, that will be delightful of you,” said Emily, gaily. “ Sir Charles and Lady Trenton are to know nothing about it, till it is ready ; and Lady Charlotte has proposed for me to be painted at her house, if that suits you, Mr. Marston ?”

“ Perhaps Lady Charlotte will allow me to call, to ascertain if the light is favourable,” answered the artist, in a quiet manner.

Lady Charlotte looked at him narrowly, with her keen, eagle eyes. She, who all her life had been an admirer of male beauty, could not fail to remark his hand-

some person ; but she admired still more his mastery over his feelings, which the keen old observer already thoroughly understood. She felt he was no common person, and she liked him. She gave a little short sigh to the memory of some long past event of her youth—when that hacknied old heart was fresh and natural—whose remembrance had passed unbidden across her brain, like a flash of lightning over a grave, and then she laughed, as she told the young man, she would positively not allow the picture to be painted anywhere else than at her house.

“I have taken Miss Carrington for the time under my protection, and we cannot come here every day, although I am an old woman—we should none of us be at our ease—but the sittings at my house will be delightful. You must come early, and lunch with us, and stay each day as long as you please.”

“But the light ?” persisted Marston.

“Oh, the light is admirable ! Sir

Thomas Lawrence told me so, a dozen times!"

"And in what dress would Miss Carrington wish to be painted?"

"Not in the fashion, at all events," said Emily, blushing. "The picture will have value as a work of art, and I should wish the dress to bear no date."

"You leave it, then, to me?"

"Entirely."

"I will think of it before to-morrow, if I may venture to hope, that I can commence so soon," rejoined the artist.

"Certainly, certainly!—the sooner the better," answered Emily, eagerly. "Come to-morrow morning, at eleven, and you shall find everything prepared for your work."

So saying, with a beaming smile, which, in spite of all his prudent resolutions, awoke a thousand pleasing fancies in the heart of the painter, she made a slight sign to Lady Charlotte, and they both arose to depart.

As they were about to leave the room,

the eyes of Miss Carrington fell on the portrait of Kate D'Arcy. Its soft, earnest expression, at once fixed her attention. She stopped to gaze on it, with a mingled feeling of curiosity and pleasure. The large, dark, expressive eyes, awoke an interest in her heart, as if she returned the gaze of a living person, fixed searchingly upon her.

"If that be from nature, you had a most beautiful model," she said, turning to the artist. "She is very young to have so sad an expression."

"It was one of my first attempts at painting from nature," answered Leonard.

"Is she still so beautiful?" inquired Miss Carrington.

"I have not seen her since my return to England," was the reply.

"Ah, then she is not an Italian. I felt sure there was too much soul in her face, for one of those Roman models."

"She was the playfellow of my childhood," said Leonard, and he turned away,

as if he wished to be no further questioned.

The curiosity of Miss Carrington was now so powerfully excited, that without remarking Marston's manner, she would have pursued the subject, had not Lady Charlotte, with the quick feeling of an experienced woman of the world, hastily prevented her, by requesting Mr. Marston to ring for her carriage.

When the artist, after handing the ladies down stairs, returned to his easel, he was so intoxicated by the charming coquetry of Emily Carrington, that although he took his brushes in his hand, he actually forgot to pursue his work. The smiles of his fair visitor seemed ever before him, thrilling through his heart. But they did not inspire him ; they dazzled and agitated his mind. He thought he was distractedly in love; but gratified vanity had undoubtedly a share in exciting the throbbing pulses of his heart. He thought of the delight awaiting him, on the morrow, when he should com-

mence her picture, till suddenly conscious of the folly of the dreams he was indulging, he sprang from his chair, and pacing his room with hurried strides, strove to regain the mastery over his feelings and his imagination. He felt that he was only preparing mortification and disappointment for himself, by presuming to indulge any warmer sentiment than admiration, for a lady of Miss Carrington's position, and that to betray the slightest love for his beautiful sitter, would be ruin to all his future prospects as a portrait painter. He resolved therefore to be prudent; to enjoy the present, and found no extravagant hopes on the innocent amiability of Miss Carrington: a woman educated in the luxurious habits of the aristocracy, with no consciousness of the reality of ordinary life, was no wife for a poor painter. He said this to himself, again and again, and resolved to be insensible to her charms.

Strong in his exalted devotion to his art, his clear, uncontaminated, and unprejudiced mind, and noble principles, he rushed for-

ward with headlong enthusiasm into the battle of society, where a man, in his dubious position, must indeed possess a healthy energy, not to be tormented to madness, by the thousand Lilliputian stings of condescending pride, and patronising impertinence.

CHAPTER IX.

I love thee—I love thee,
'Tis all that I can say ;
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day ;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray.

Hood.

AT eleven o'clock on the following day, Marston entered the drawing-room of Lady Charlotte Delmar. Miss Carrington was already there, and both ladies received him with the most cordial politeness.

He made the arrangements necessary for the commencement of the portrait, with

a suitable appearance of tranquillity ; but he was far from being so composed, and indifferent, as he appeared. Conscious of his passionate admiration of the fair creature, whose beauty it was his task to scrutinize, with the narrowest attention, in order to recreate her charms, and even personify the very expression of her soul on the canvass, he strove with all the force of his strong mind, to govern his glances, so as to express nothing but the calm attention of the artist.

The young coquette seemed determined, however, to be assured, at least, of his admiration, whilst treating him with the entrancing familiarity of an old friend. One moment their hands came in contact, in arranging the drapery; at another, she suddenly changed her position, so as to display one of her beautiful arms to the best advantage; or the scarf fell from her shoulders, and they both jumped up to replace it; and then she laughed and blushed, and thanked the painter, with such

animated, yet timid glances, that he must have had a heart of stone, to remain an unmoved spectator of her fascinations.

Though Emily shot flying glances, at the eyes of Leonard, it was almost impossible to persuade her to regard him steadily for two minutes together, and when she did so, her expression was so different from the character she wished to pourtray, that he more than once, felt tempted, during the first hours, to lay down his pencils in despair.

Lady Charlotte, whilst seated at a distance, with her embroidery, narrowly observed what was going on; and at the end of a certain time, she thought it very necessary to call her young friend to order. She did not believe, as Marston did, that Miss Carrington's manner was entirely innocent and natural. She understood the arts of coquetry better than he did; and though she thought it was all very excusable that she should amuse herself, to a certain point, and please her vanity, by

counting this rising artist amongst the list of her admirers, she had powerful reasons for wishing the matter not to become serious, especially under her roof.

She brought her chair to Marston's side, under the pretence of observing him work; and whilst her keen old eyes narrowly watched Miss Carrington, the young lady was compelled to sit with becoming tranquillity, in the position the painter required

At one o'clock, they adjourned to lunch, and there, relieved, from all feeling of restraint, Emily conversed with charming vivacity; the effect of which which was heightened by the old-fashioned costume in which she had chosen to be painted.

When Marston returned home, he felt he had passed one of the happiest days of his life. The past and the future had been alike forgotten. in the enjoyment of the present; a present in which everything had united to charm his taste and his imagination. That night, he thought less of consequences, and more of Miss Car-

rington than he had done the day before; and it was with the utmost impatience, that he counted the hours of the morning, till the time arrived, when he could return to the presence of his charming model.

With a tremulous sort of anxiety, to which he had hitherto been a stranger, Miss Carrington had awaited his arrival; and old lady Charlotte began to repent the assistance she had afforded to the portrait-painting, when she observed the blushes which covered her young friend's face, when the name of Mr. Marston was announced.

“This must not go too far! the young man must be kept in his proper place,” she thought, as she arose and received her handsome guest, with every appearance of cordiality.

Such is the hypocrisy of society. Falsehood, hatred and malice, all go smoothly on, under the appearance of politeness, and no one in fashionable life considers these to be sins, or even faults, when they are

adroitly covered and only exercised for the advancement of self-interest.

Marston, though he flattered himself that he possessed considerable knowledge of what is called the world, suspected nothing of the old lady's duplicity ; and he was less prepared to withstand the soft tenderness which, in Miss Carrington's manner, had, almost unconsciously to herself, replaced her former animation and vivacity. In a sort of delirium he painted like one inspired, and the lady's unusual tranquillity, favouring his enthusiasm, he had already sketched in her whole figure, and given an expression to the head, with which he was himself almost satisfied, when Lady Charlotte was called away to receive a visitor.

An embarrassed silence for several minutes followed her departure. Miss Carrington looked down upon her large Indian fan, and quite forgot she was sitting for her picture. Marston still held his pencil in his hand, but he gazed with un-

disguised admiration for several minutes on his beautiful model, and then heaved a deep sigh.

Miss Carrington heard it, and looked up, but Marston had averted his eyes, and was very properly busy with his work. By a strange association of ideas, whilst surveying with admiration the beautiful being before him, the image of poor Kate, as she had formerly sat for her portrait, in his boyish days, arose before him. Her simple, subdued gaiety of temper, and earnest feeling, were as different as her poor garments, and pale face, from the brilliant beauty and attire of the child of fashion.

“Why,’ he thought, “has Providence made such a wide difference between them.”

And he sighed as a brother might have done, at the remembrance of poor Kate’s former bitter struggle with her hard destiny, and the trials to which she had probably been more recently exposed.

Miss Carrington accepted the sigh as an offering to herself, and her vanity was flattered.

“ You are very amusing, Mr. Marston,” she said, after she had for some time vainly expected the artist to address her. “ I hope you are not painting my eyes, for I feel they express nothing but weariness and stupidity.”

“ If Miss Carrington is fatigued,” replied Leonard, with the most distant politeness, “ I should be sorry to intrude a moment longer on her patience. We had better, perhaps, conclude the sitting for to-day.”

“ Oh, no—no—you must not take what I say so seriously,” she hastily replied. “ I am positively not in the least tired, and you will never get the picture ready in time, if we do not profit by every opportunity. Perhaps you don’t know I am to go into the country at Easter, with Sir Charles and Lady Trenton ; and when *I*

return, it will be too late for you to re-commence."

"There is still a fortnight till Easter," replied the artist, quietly.

At this moment Lady Charlotte entered from the front drawing-room. Marston looked up, and saw she was accompanied by a gentleman, entirely unknown to him. He was of a tall, slender figure, and probably about eight-and-twenty. Though not handsome, his features were regular, and his forehead high. His dress and his manner were equally simple, but it was the studied simplicity of one who aimed at being a very fine gentleman. The cold rigidity which seemed to encase his countenance like a mask, the calm indifference of his carriage, and the even, quiet tone of his voice were very refined, but not natural, although they had been so long affected, they had become habitual. A cutting sarcasm was the only variation to this monotony, by which Mr. Lesley

betrayed his sense of superiority from time to time, in general society; but men of his own standing knew that he had been a very gay fellow at college, and that even now, in some secret and select circles, he was not particularly refined in the choice of his amusements. It was even said that he could be witty and eloquent when it suited his purpose.

But, in the aristocratical and fashionable world, where it was his miserable ambition to make his way, he was chiefly remarkable for his fastidiousness. In fact, his mind was radically and inveterately diseased. He felt bitterly, every hour of his life, that though the son of a wealthy trader and highly educated, he was of very low extraction, compared to the people with whom it was his delight to associate, and he was always struggling to make others forget this, although he could not forget it himself.

Aware of the vulgarity of affectation, he avoided the appearance of it with horror,

yet, at the same time, there was nothing natural about him. He was always playing the part of the cold, indifferent, supercilious, fine gentleman, whilst his heart was glowing with passion, and the very fountains of his existence were dried up by his burning ambition for social and political distinction, and the labours this imposed.

His father had an estate joining Sir Charles Trenton's; and as the Baronet wished to secure his votes for the county, he invited the young man occasionally to dinner. On these invitations Lesley grounded a hope of getting, at some future day, into Parliament, by the Baronet's influence, as they both belonged to the party of the Protectionists.

“Ah, Mr. Lesley,” exclaimed Emily, descending from the elevation on which she had been sitting and holding out her hand with a slight air of embarrassment, as she advanced to meet the gentleman, “I declare it is quite abominable of Lady Char-

lotte to make you an exception to my law of exclusion."

"Lady Charlotte had too much charity, to extend the exercise of your law to its utmost extreme," returned Lesley, in a soft tone, but with a certain coldness which was best calculated to pique the vanity of the fair coquette. She never knew whether he admired her or not; and he flattered himself that this uncertainty was better calculated to excite an interest for him in her heart, than the most devoted attention. He regarded her as a pretty toy, no more; but he had resolved, if possible, to marry her for her fashion and for her fortune.

"Mr. Lesley—Mr. Marston," said the lady of the house, and the two gentlemen bowed to each other, as slightly as possible.

The former, with the feeling that an artist was scarcely worthy of being bowed to at all; and the latter with the calm pride, which was a part of his nature, and the sensitiveness, which, at once, felt and despised the impertinence of the man of the

world. A slight tinge of jealousy and discontent at the interruption, might also have some influence in predisposing the artist to have no friendly feeling towards the stranger.

“I am delighted, Mr. Lesley, you have given us an opportunity of hearing your opinion of Emily’s portrait,” said Lady Charlotte, “before it is too far advanced to be altered. Mr. Marston, I am sure, can have no objection to your seeing it in its present unfinished state.”

“If it is Miss Carrington’s wish,” said Marston very gravely.

“Oh, certainly,” cried Emily, who was eager to force Mr. Lesley to compliment her, although, behind his back, she pitied him for being the son of a city merchant, and had been heard to declare he was too good for such a position, with something almost amounting to contempt. “You are a decided connoisseur, and I hope you will tell us frankly what you think of the likeness.”

Mr. Lesley smiled.

“ You may rely upon my candour, at all times,” he replied; and though possessing a very small knowledge, either of paintings or pictures, he advanced, in a most unmerciful spirit, to criticise the artist’s work.

He had heard the name of Marston; but it had escaped his memory, that he had recently been the successful candidate for the cartoon prize; he was even more unconscious, than the Marquis of Carville, that his talent had been recognized and patronized by distinguished collectors, men of the finest taste in England; and after a careless survey of the young artist, he concluded he was some unknown votary of art, to whom Miss Carrington was sitting, by way of encouragement.

Though, according to the received prescriptions of literary fashion, he was a devoted admirer of Goethe and Wordsworth, he was incapable of perceiving poetry in anything but words. He was incapable of feeling, that genius has also a language in

colour, and form, and music, for those to whom eloquence has been denied, as the means of expressing their exalted perceptions of the eternal and the true ; and he looked upon all painters, whom the stamp of fashion had not distinguished, as mere workmen for the amusement of the fanciful and luxurious. He was, however, well acquainted with the cant of pretenders to taste, and a knowledge of art ; and he had words at command.

Marston arose as Mr. Lesley approached the easel, and Miss Carrington playfully resumed her former position.

“ You must find the likeness exact,” said Lady Charlotte, with her glass at her eye.

“ I am somewhat difficult in such matters,” said Lesley, with a contemptuous sneer on his face, as he glanced carelessly at the picture. “ It is not by lines and colour alone that a resemblance of Miss Carrington can be given. Her true portrait painter must belong to the highest order ;

his heart must be capable of comprehending, and his hand of delineating the soul as well as the features."

" You must admit," rejoined the old lady, "the expression of the eyes is exactly that of Emily."

" You have a happier faculty of perceiving likenesses than I have, perhaps; or I am unusually blind this morning," answered the barrister; "but it appears to me, it is exactly expression which is wanting."

An answer trembled on the lips of Marston ; but he mastered himself, for he felt that one of the trials was now come, which his uncle had foretold, and that if he desired not to mar his fortunes by his independence and his pride, he must quietly sacrifice his feelings to the fancies and impertinence of those, whose superior position in the scale of society, and an opinion, that he was their hired workman, made utterly insensible, or unmindful, whether he had feelings or not. " I am to be paid, and I must submit," he thought, and the thought

came, happily, quick enough to check the caustic reply, which hovered on his lips.

“It appears to me, also, that the position of the head is by no means advantageously chosen,” pursued Lesley, in his usual quiet tone; “but really you should not ask my opinion—I detest finding fault. I would gladly see your portrait painted by Grant, Miss Carrington; there might, then, be some hope of seeing justice done you.”

Marston had turned away to busy himself with his colours at a side table, so that no one saw the indignant expression of his countenance, as he heard this insolent observation. Miss Carrington hoped it had not reached his ears. Before he resumed his place at his easel, he had fully mastered his anger, and felt only contempt for a man so devoid of all noble feeling, and thorough good breeding, as to be capable of insulting where no redress was open.

“It is really unfair to pass judgment on a picture which is scarcely begun,” said Lady Charlotte; and anxious to change

the subject which had taken a turn she did not expect, she proposed that, as it was nearly two o'clock, they should adjourn to the dining-room.

Marston endeavoured to excuse himself, under the plea of another engagement ; but Miss Carrington insisted on his remaining till four o'clock, as he had previously promised, and her manner was so flattering and bewitching, that he could not refuse her request. It must be confessed, likewise, that a feeling of vanity made him not unwilling to show Lesley, that he was considered and treated as a gentleman by others, whatever might be his opinion of him.

Lady Charlotte was an admirable hostess, and as she sat at the head of her table, endeavoured to bring her guests into perfect harmony with each other. Miss Carrington, in her quaint old garments, and with her pretty coquetry, was more charming than ever, and even Marston could not detect the slightest shade of difference in her manner towards Lesley and himself.

Both gentlemen exerted their utmost conversational powers ; but for the exclusive benefit of the ladies. Neither addressed a syllable to the other, and Lesley affected a perfect unconsciousness of any other man being in company. When they arose to return up stairs, he took his leave, and even when about to depart, the bow was almost imperceptible, with which he saluted the painter. Marston did not return it, and the fine gentleman was somewhat astonished, when, by a momentary glance, he perceived the expression of quiet contempt, with which the artist regarded him. It was the triumph of pride over vanity ; of calm, good sense over impertinence and folly. For that day, the quiet tone of easy familiarity, which at the commencement of the portrait painting had pervaded the little party in Lady Charlotte's drawing-room, was entirely at an end, and Leonard, awokened to a full sense of his position, was studiously cold and reserved.

He returned home with a feeling of

bitter mortification, such as he had never before experienced, and which his strong and manly spirit, for several hours, vainly struggled to subdue. He could not work, he could not distract his attention from corroding thoughts ; but he conquered them at last, and he felt the full measure of his folly, and his weakness, in being thus disturbed, by the empty impertinence of a man whom he neither knew nor esteemed. He began to think that his change of manner at Lady Charlotte's had been too abrupt, and had probably caused the ladies to suppose he was offended ; but he resolved, if possible, to do away with this impression.

On the following day, he was gay and unembarrassed, as before Mr. Lesley's visit ; and old Lady Charlotte was perfectly astonished by the brilliancy and varied powers of his conversation. Miss Carrington had sense enough to appreciate his extraordinary abilities and natural character, whose strength, originality, and truth,

slightly mingled with romance, totally differed from those of the men she habitually met, and fascinated her imagination, if her heart remained untouched. Flattered by the admiration he at times involuntarily betrayed, she was equally piqued by his assumed reserve; and though certainly no thought of marrying a poor painter had ever crossed her imagination, he had resolved, before the end of the third days' sitting, that, in spite of all his prudence, Mr. Marston should be desperately in love with her. The spoilt child of fortune and fashion, surrounded by admirers whom she believed to be all sighing for her fortune and not for herself, she felt there would be an agreeable excitement in such an affair, which the affected smoothness of mere fashionable society could never afford.

Utterly ignorant of the force of passion in a man of noble and earnest character, like Marston, she ventured on this dangerous pastime with reckless carelessness, like a child over the treacherous ice, which

glittering in the sunshine, is thinly spread above a dark, fathomless, and deadly abyss. She took no thought of the misery she might inflict by this gratification of her vanity.

So true it is that the finer feelings of the soul are dulled and almost deadened by the false ideas of their own superiority and worth, in which the children of wealth and luxury are educated. Surrounded by an atmosphere of lies, they see all things through a distorting medium, and the fervent affections of the heart, in which self is forgotten; the devoted love which finds its joy in sacrifice, are utterly unknown. The cant of feeling, and the reckless pursuit of admiration and dissipation, are all which supply their place.

Time was, when this was limited to the upper classes in England. But it is a plague spot which has now spread far and wide, over the whole body of social life. Almost all our women of the middle classes, in great towns, have become slaves of

fashion. Some pretend to pursue knowledge, some religion ; some are devoted to dress, others to scandal ; but all employ more than half their lives in visiting, and receiving company. Honest industry is looked upon as a disgrace, even in the mother of a family, and daughters, who may perhaps be cast upon the world by their parent's extravagance, learn nothing but the love of dress, and a few useless accomplishments, and whilst unable to darn their father's stockings, or hem him a pocket-handkerchief, are incapable after an expensive, but superficial education, of any higher accomplishment. But female education is the rage of the day, and the proper care of a household, and even the healthy, solid instruction of the mind, is considered waste of time. Moral discipline, the training of the soul to high and noble aims, is totally lost sight of.

Miss Carrington, indeed, by her birth and fortune, was placed above all mer-

cenary cares. No one had ever trained and developed the higher feelings of her soul ; and after the loss of her mother she only knew love by name. Marriage she had been always taught to regard under the form of a lace veil, a carriage and four, and a presentation at Court, with ten thousand a year, and a title,—it had peculiar charms.

But of all this, Marston had no suspicion. He never thought that so lovely a being, whose varying countenance seemed to express all the finest and tenderest feelings of the soul, knew nothing of them, but as passing emotions, cherished for effect, but incapable of permanently influencing her actions, or her tastes. She quoted poetry to him, and as her eyes flashed with enthusiasm, in giving utterance to the loftiest thoughts, he forgot his assumed reserve, and poured forth his own admiration for all that is beautiful in nature and art, with a fervour which she felt, as she would the declamation of an

actor, which excited for the moment, but was forgotten on the morrow.

At another time, she questioned Leonard about his relatives, and sighed deeply when she heard that he was an orphan.

“ I too, am alone in the world,” she said, with another sigh. “ I only remember my mother, to grieve for her loss. I have often wished for a sister—for something to love. Did you never wish for a sister, Mr. Marston ?” she enquired in the softest, and most touching voice.

Marston replied, with ill-assumed composure—

“ Little Kate, whose picture you admired in my painting-room, engrossed my brotherly affection when a boy. I wanted no one else.”

“ Did you really love her so much ?” inquired the young lady, with a feeling approaching to jealousy.

“ Oh ! yes, I loved her tenderly,” he said, with more tranquillity, for he forgot the present, as his thoughts wandered

back to the past, "she was such a gentle, sensible little creature. Everybody loved her, she was so patient, and good. And I know now how much deprivation she must have suffered as a child, though no complaint ever passed her lips. She sought no pleasure, but in serving those she loved."

"And you were one of them?" inquired Emily, in a low voice.

Leonard did not reply to this question. He did not hear it. He was thinking of one of little Kate's plaintive songs.

"Do you know that song, Miss Carrington? I never heard any one sing it but little Kate."

"To what song do you allude?" inquired the lady, in a tone of pique which accorded ill with the artist's feelings.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," he replied, suddenly aroused to a consciousness of his inattention. "I was thinking of the songs the poor child sung to me, when a boy, in my uncle's old church-yard."

“How poetical and pretty,” exclaimed Emily, “was it a romantic church-yard? all ivy and flowery graves?”

“Oh, no, it was between smoky brick houses, in the very heart of the City of London.”

“How horrible!” cried the fine lady, with an affected shudder.

“It was a paradise to us,” answered the painter; and he gazed with a kind of startled curiosity at her he addressed, as if to read the secrets of her heart. “Poetry, Miss Carrington, exists everywhere, when the scene is hallowed by love. Affection can diffuse a charm over the most squalid reality.”

“Oh! that is really being too poetical for me, to find charms in a city burying-ground! the most disgusting nuisance in our modern Babylon,” she returned, laughing. “I should as much think of looking for poetry in Cranbourne Alley, or Newport Market.”

“The poetry of real life may no doubt

be found in both," answered Marston, gravely, "it is happy for you, Miss Carrington, that your experience has hitherto only made you acquainted with the poetry of imagination."

The lady looked down; she felt she scarcely knew why, that she had made a mistake, and she rejoiced when her embarrassment was interrupted, by the arrival of Mr. Lesley, who, in consequence of an order given by Lady Charlotte, was at once shewn into the painting-room.

This time he took not the slightest notice of Marston, nor did the artist give any sign of his being aware of his entrance. Yet they felt each other's presence in every nerve, and they hated each other, with bitter hatred—the one for his contempt—the other for his defiance.

The keen-sighted Lady Charlotte looked for a few moments earnestly from one to the other. Marston was mixing colours on his palette, with the utmost tranquillity, whilst a slight smile played about his hand-

some mouth. Lesley was standing leaning against an old cabinet, quietly stroking his hat, and talking to Miss Carrington, with the simplicity which peculiarly distinguished him. A greater contrast could not have been found than that of the healthy, vigorous-minded, independent, spirited man of genius, and the sophisticated, false, and dissatisfied man of the world.

The old lady was not deceived by appearances ; she understood at once, that the less these two men were left together the better ; and declaring that she had a beautiful print in the next room, of which she wanted Mr. Lesley's opinion, she led him away thither.

No sooner were they gone, than Marston arose, and begged he might no longer detain Miss Carrington, as he had an engagement, which compelled him to shorten that day's sitting.

" You dine at Sir Charles Trenton's to-morrow, do you not ?" she inquired.

"I received an invitation yesterday," he replied, "and shall have that honour."

"I shall be prevented sitting to you in the morning, so I am delighted to hear we shall meet in the evening. You will not fail to come," said the girl, with a smile.

"It would be impossible for me to do so, now I know you desire it," replied the artist, with the conventional manner of a man of the world; and, hastily taking leave, he left the house.

For a moment, after he disappeared, the young lady stood considering the words he had last uttered. They were flattering, but the tone in which they had been uttered did not content her. She felt that Marston did not seek her favour, and she was mortified and vexed; she resolved to triumph over his proud indifference, cost what it might. Had she known the painful struggle of passion and principle she had already excited in the painter's breast, she would, perhaps, have desisted from this cruel sporting with the happiness of a

noble and generous heart, for the mere gratification of her vanity.

The remainder of the afternoon she passed, or we may say wasted, in taking a German lesson from Mr. Lesley, who knew very little more about the language than herself. This gentleman's quiet manner was said to have been peculiarly successful with women ; it is what is called penetrating. It piqued their vanity, and old Lady Charlotte, who for some mysterious consideration, had engaged to assist his matrimonial speculation with Miss Carington, had warned him not to flatter her. She was already too much accustomed to the hacknied language of admiration, she said, to be influenced by it, in the slightest degree. And she was quite right ; there was much ground to be gained, before Emily was likely to be won to think, for a moment, of sacrificing all her high-wrought hopes of a coronet, by marrying the son of a dry-salter, whose money had been made in Thames Street.

Sir Charles Trenton, who looked upon Lesley as an impossible alliance for his fair relative, and who had his own reasons for wishing her to remain unmarried, rather encouraged his coming about the house, considering that he kept more dangerous suitors at a distance. But he was not fully aware of the boundless ambition, which lurked beneath the barrister's calm exterior ; not the noble ambition of a generous soul ; but the miserable, narrow-minded ambition of a college, a club, and a clique, which seeks distinction in extravagance, in money, in political partizanship, and in fashion, whilst it despises all men of different principles and opinions.

He knew not what truth was ; his whole mind was a tissue of prejudices, and he was unconscious of it. He looked on the world through a distorting glass, and was convinced that three-fourths of mankind were doomed to ill-requited labour, and suffering, and deprivation, in order that

such men as he, with minds blinded by the pretensions and prejudices of a class to which they either belong, or are struggling to attain, may enjoy wealth, honour, and ease, and indulge all the vanities and selfishness of their diseased minds.

He was of Burke's opinion, that the rights of the people were pretended rights, to be settled by convention, for the convenience of certain possessors of property, and inheritors of honours. Burke was, therefore, his idol, as well as that of many other young aristocrats of the same stamp.

CHAPTER X.

Ours is a degrading and dwarfing system of society ;
the middle classes are veneered instead of being
heart of oak.

Southe's Letters.

WHEN Marston entered Sir Charles Trenton's drawing-room, on the following day, he found no one there but his host and hostess. The gentleman received him with polite condescension ; but the lady gave him a more friendly welcome, and seemed pleased to talk of the agreeable days they had spent in Italy together.

Lady Trenton was amiable and gentle, and had she been born in a humbler station, she might have been a happy and a useful woman ; but married to a man who despised her, her wealth had been a curse to her, and she was compelled to lead a useless life amongst persons who seemed as if they scarcely heeded the fact of her existence.

She was Lady Trenton—wore fine clothes—went to fine parties—and was envied by some, but laughed at by others, as a silly little woman. But she was perfectly indifferent to all this ; her soul felt it not ; she had need of something higher and holier to occupy and support her, and amidst all the luxury which surrounded her, no voice spoke sympathy to the loving woman's heart.

At first, Sir Charles was only indifferent; but since his hopes of children had been disappointed, his indifference had deepened into hate. He had sought amusement and excitement from others, and she felt this

with a bitter pain, that was wearing away her life. Yet she smiled, and a slight tinge of rouge covered the paleness of her cheek. Nevertheless, her wasted and slender figure, although attired with the most studied elegance, offered a sad contrast to the fresh and graceful Miss Carrington, who soon afterwards entered, blooming in all the conscious beauty of nineteen. She held out her hand in the prettiest manner in the world to Mr. Marston, and she glanced, for a moment, in his face ; the next, she turned away, and took a place near the window.

Sir Charles Trenton went up to her, and enquired what she had been doing all the morning, in a careless voice, but with an impressive look and manner, which Marston observed with astonishment. Lady Trenton's back was towards them ; but, as her husband continued his conversation with his ward, in the intimate and playful tone of a lover, rather than of a relative, the young artist observed, that she listened to

the words, he addressed to her, without comprehending them, and that her manner every moment became more restless and uneasy.

The arrival of guests, fortunately, soon engaged the attention both of Sir Charles and herself. The party was not large. It was merely what is called a family dinner, to which certain persons were invited, who were not producible on grand occasions.

A county member of parliament, with a proud and stately lady of good family, but country habits and education; a mercantile member of the same honourable assembly, with an ambitious and vulgar wife, whom political interests made it necessary to invite once a year, were the principal personages. Lady Charlotte came to help to amuse them, in charity to Lady Trenton, and to flatter them, by somebody with a title being there to meet them, for they were all most rigid aristocrats.

Marston was enjoying the delight of an animated conversation with Miss Carring-

ton, when the name of Mr. Lesley was announced. She saw a slight colour pass over the artist's face, but he very quietly finished what he was saying; nor did he move away, till a minute or two after the barrister had come up to address her. He then conversed with Lady Trenton as if unconscious that he had ever met him before.

Lesley was greatly astonished to find the painter a guest in a house, where, with all his pretensions, he thought it an honour to be invited; and where he considered the rest of the company of a class immeasurably superior to an artist, being men of wealth and political position. He felt half offended that Sir Charles Trenton had asked such a man to meet him; and his vanity was first soothed by the arrival of Mr. Cosway, who was universally acknowledged to be a man of family and fashion.

But who could picture the astonishment of this rising young man, who piqued himself on a slight acquaintance with Cosway, when the latter, after speaking a few

words with Sir Charles and Lady Trenton, addressing a compliment to Miss Carrington, and slightly bowing to himself, went up to Marston, and shook him cordially by the hand.

“My dear fellow, what have you been doing with yourself, lately?” he enquired, “I have been three several times to your rooms, and always found them empty. Your guardian Sybil promised to deliver my cards, so I presume you know I have not been unfaithful. When shall I find you at home, that I may repeat my visit?”

“To-morrow at two o’clock—should you be disengaged.”

“Exactly! I will be punctual to a minute. Miss Carrington, allow me the honour,” he said, gliding with easy assurance between that young lady and Mr. Lesley, the moment dinner was announced so as to leave him no time to offer to conduct her to table.

In a few minutes, the whole party had adjourned to the dining-room.

Trenton was an elegant man of the world, with such ordinary abilities, as when high polished and accompanied by rank and wealth, pass for talents of a superior order. One faculty he certainly possessed! he could talk with easy fluency remarkably well about nothing; and he was admirable at the foot of his own dinner-table, when pretty women supported him on either side, to whom he could murmur his soft witticisms about the scandal of the fashionable world. But with the two members' ladies, this was quite impossible. They were not of the initiated, and lacked totally the beauty to inspire him; so, after he had said something about the Opera to the county lady, he knew not what topic to introduce. It is a horrid bore to such gentlemen, to be out of their set.

The lady was evidently in a very bad humour. She was indignant that a woman of old county family, who was perfectly worshipped in her own neighbourhood, and visited on quite an intimate footing at the

Duke's, who was Lord Lieutenant of the County, should be asked to dinner in London to meet Mr. and Mrs. White the wool-merchant and his wife, to whom she would not have bowed at a race ball.

She looked daggers at Mrs. White, who returned them empoisoned.

Nobody had been introduced, and all those of the company who were unacquainted seemed to think each other unworthy to be spoken to. Poor Trenton had nothing to say; Lesley was too fine to speak a word above his breath; and Miss Carrington only conversed in a half whisper with Marston, who sat next her, so had it not been for Cosway and Lady Charlotte, a dead silence would shortly have pervaded the whole party. But Cosway was never afraid of committing himself, like aspirants to fashion, such as Lesley, whose pretensions did not impose upon him, and whose fastidiousness he delighted in shocking. He sought amusement and information wherever they were to be found; and

to the utter horror of some of the company who were of less consideration, he had very soon engaged Mr. White in a discussion concerning the duty on tallow; which he talked about as learnedly as if he had been himself an importer.

Lesley, with a slight air of disgust, meantime endeavoured to get up a conversation with Lady Trenton, about Mr. D'Israeli's last novel,

"It was too political for her taste," she said, "she liked Lady Fullarton's sweet tales much better. She felt quite inclined to become a Roman Catholic, whilst she was reading them; and for her part, she sometimes suspected they must be written by some pale, interesting, father confessor. I like Dickens too," she added, "he is quite in a different style to be sure; but little Florence and Paul Dombey, made me remember my own childhood,"

"I once looked into the *Pickwick Papers*," he replied, "but I positively could

not get through three pages. He is steeped to the very elbows in vulgarity."

"But his children are charming," persisted Lady Trenton. "I had a little brother once, who died like little Paul. I absolutely could not lay down the book, till I had come to the poor little boy's death. Dickens must love children, and have an excellent heart."

"I have not read his works," answered Lesley, with unmoved tranquillity, as if he pitied her ladyship's want of taste.

"Mr. Lesley," said Mr. White, in a very distinct voice, across the table, "I shall be very happy to take a glass of wine with you, sir."

Mr. Lesley bowed and looked exceedingly astonished.

"I had the pleasure of knowing your father," pursued the member, "some twenty years ago, of the house of Smith, Lesley, and Co., Thames-Street. I am told you are the son of Lesley, who was my friend from a boy, and is now, I hear, a very warm man."

Lesley bowed, sipped his wine, and made no reply.

“Lesley was a shrewd, sensible fellow, I assure you, whom no son need be ashamed of,” continued White; “a clear-headed, honest-hearted man, who detested all affectation and impertinence. “I was not in the wool trade then, and we had some little dealings together, about sending red herrings to Naples.”

Cosway was highly amused; but he began to eat the wing of a chicken as if he had not heard a word that had been said.

There was a dead silence.

“Oh, there must positively be some mistake, my dear sir,” said Miss Carrington, addressing Mr. White. “I am quite positive, Mr. Lesley does not even know what such a vulgar thing as a red herring is,” and she laughed in her silvery voice, in the prettiest manner imaginable.

“Charming—charming,” whispered Cosway in her ear, and he too smiled; but her wit was only an excuse. He smiled

at the folly of ridiculous pretension, with the pride of a man of family.

“I beg pardon, really, if I am mistaken,” said Mr. White, who began to think that such might be the case, “but the Mr. Lesley with whom I was acquainted, knew very well what a red herring was, for he made his fortune by them, and it is very considerable. I inquired about him lately, and you were pointed out to me in the gallery of the House of Commons, as his son.”

“I was not aware my father had the honour of your acquaintance,” said Lesley, very coldly.

A look from Sir Charles Trenton, which Cosway understood, made him now interfere, so as to render the conversation more general. He spoke to Marston concerning the ball at the French President’s, where they had been together, in passing through Paris, and he chose the subject expressly to mortify Lesley, who considered himself a man of conversation, and who, not hav-

ing been recently abroad, could bear no part in it. He could not conceal his astonishment and mortification at discovering that though Marston was an artist, he was a very different person from what he had at first imagined, and was on an intimate footing, with a man whose acquaintance it had long been his ambition to attain.

The only person from whom he now found support, was old Lady Charlotte, who had her private reasons for being annoyed at his discomfiture, in the presence of Miss Carrington, whose husband she had resolved he should be.

When the ladies withdrew, he found his position far from agreeable, and followed to the drawing-room as soon as possible.

The rest of the evening passed as such evenings usually pass, with a little indifferent music, in turning over certain books of prints of very questionable merit, and affected sentiment, and which have been

turned over all the season, till even the sight of the binding has become wearying. These occupations were seasoned by a little very insipid conversation, in which language fulfils what has been said to be its *real* use, —conceals the thoughts instead of expressing them ; and then the equipages came, and the company went away, to the infinite delight both of host and hostess. Cosway and Marston alone remained a few minutes after every one else had departed.

“ Thank heaven it is over ! ” exclaimed Sir Charles, as soon as the last carriage drove away, “ it is a perfect horror to be compelled to be civil to such people. The Reform Bill has made it a positive bore to be a member of parliament.”

“ Oh, for my part, I find such new importations delightful,” said Emily laughing, “ they are so perfectly natural. I thought I should have expired when Mr. White accused Lesley of being the son of a red herring merchant.”

“Considering it a very respectable profession, no doubt,” said Lady Trenton, with her soft smile.

“I was rejoiced to see the affected puppy get a lesson,” rejoined Cosway, “I can bear any vulgarity better than the affectation of extreme elegance. His arrogance at the club has become quite insupportable, and imposes on some good-natured fellows, who absolutely worship him. He is so insufferably quiet that he gives no man a hold on him, and has hitherto escaped taking down; but this story of the red herrings is admirable. It is too good to be lost.”

“Have a little mercy, Cosway! don’t be too witty at the expense of my friend,” said Sir Charles. “His father may have sold red herrings twenty years ago; but his tenants’ voices are not less sweet, and are very necessary to me now, to bring me in for the county. Remember, the affair happened at my house.”

“White is an admirable fellow, what-

ever may be his trade," rejoined the barrister, "and deserves to be Purveyor General of tallow and red herrings to Her Majesty's forces. Come, Marston, it is late, we must be going."

The two gentlemen then took a hasty leave, and departed.

"And this is the society in which you were anxious I should push my way," said the painter to his companion, as soon as they had gained the street.

"Not exactly," returned Cosway, laughing, "it is a good house ; but I admit the company was not perfectly select to-day. You will probably never meet such people as those Whites there again."

"I complain of no man's manners." answered Marston. "Mr. White appeared to me a plain-spoken, kind-hearted man. But the thing is an utter waste of existence."

"I differ from you there, my dear fellow," was Cosway's reply. "I cannot consider eating turtle soup and venison a waste of existence. I find it, on the contrary, most

agreeable pastime, and exceedingly nourishing."

"But think of the time and money expended on one of these dinners," persisted Marston, "for the host and hostess to rejoice when it is over, and they are rid of their guests. I can understand, Cosway, that you, who are accustomed to that wretched waste of existence, called a fashionable life, cannot regard it with the same feeling as I do, to whom it is comparatively novel. You cannot feel all its vanity, heartlessness, and falsehood. But I am astonished that with your active mind and fancy, you are not disgusted by its inanity and stupidity, and those rules of etiquette, which for the benefit of commonplace folly, proscribe every animated expression of wit, feeling, or even talent. I have always felt as if my faculties were benumbed by the frozen atmosphere of a fine dinner."

"It is only your want of habit," replied Cosway, "I am a privileged person, and

I rattle on at all times. I like a good dinner, and I am very happy that rich people feel themselves obliged to give them, though I confess I never could exactly discover why, except it be for the pleasure of us poor bachelors, who have a predilection for champagne, without the money to pay for it, and who must otherwise die of club chops and Temple pork, before we are called to the bar. I am at the same time convinced that all fine dinner givers are under an infinite obligation to an unexceptionable fellow like myself, who ventures to talk above his breath. But here we are, at your lodgings, so good night and don't dream too much of Emily Carrington, for I have a slight fancy for her myself."

But in spite of this injunction, it must be confessed that Marston thought and dreamt of nothing else, till he returned to Lady Charlotte's, to continue his painting, on the morrow.

Obstacles however occurred to retard

the progress of the portrait, or perhaps they were intentionally invented by Miss Carrington, to prolong her intercourse with Marston. The day, nevertheless, came at last, when his charming model was seated before him, more captivating than ever.

There was a soft, bewitching, tenderness in her countenance, that morning, such as he had never seen before; for Emily, in spite of all her coquetry, was beginning to feel something more than admiration for the handsome painter.

He had, as Cosway had foreseen, become the fashion that season, and she had had frequent opportunities of meeting him in society, where his whole bearing had pleased her greatly. She had heard every one admire him, and she was mortified, nay almost pained, that he paid her no devoted attention.

Aware that her portrait would speedily be terminated, an uneasy anxiety took possession of her, when she considered that there would probably, for the remainder of

that year, be few opportunities for their meeting. She never thought of marrying him ; she could not expect that he would make her any declaration of attachment, and when once again in his presence, she desired nothing but to render herself as charming to him as possible. Old Lady Charlotte knew better than the young lady herself, that she was playing a very dangerous game, for she had still some remembrance of having been in love in her youth ; but as she thought it possible she might be able to make a better arrangement with Marston, in case of his obtaining the hand of the heiress by her assistance, than with Lesley under similar circumstances, she looked on, and pretended to observe nothing.

Marston was absent and silent ; he was even more uneasy than Miss Carrington, under the conviction that their pleasant intercourse was drawing to a close.

“I hope I do not too long trespass on your patience,” he said, after his model,

contrary to her usual wont, had remained more than five minutes without speaking, with an expression of vexation on her face, which the artist did well not to copy.

“Oh, dear no,” she replied, with an involuntary start, “I hope I don’t look wearied. I would sit a dozen times more with pleasure, if you required it, were I not going into the country to-morrow. It is really very provoking.”

“When are you likely to return?” inquired Marston, in a voice not quite so tranquil as he desired.

“Oh, not till next spring,” she replied. “Sir Charles talks of Brighton or Paris, for the winter. It is far too soon to leave London now—it is so delightful in fine weather, when one can dance half the night with open windows, without fear of taking cold.”

“Are you not fond of summer flowers?” inquired the artist.

“Oh, yes, in drawing-rooms, or in a con-

servatory. Flowers are most beautiful by lamp-light."

"Then you don't admire them in their own free homes—the woods and meadows."

"Oh, yes, when I have nothing more interesting to admire, and London is quite empty," answered the girl with one of her pretty laughs, which made the admirers of her beauty, think all she uttered charming, "but you must acknowledge that at this time of year, there is far more pleasure to be found in London—and that at all seasons,—agreeable conversation and society are necessary to enhance the charms of the country."

"But you draw, Miss Carrington ; I fully imagined, you were a devoted admirer of nature."

"Oh, yes," she quickly returned, "I admire every thing beautiful in nature and art. I was enchanted with the shores of Italy ; but that only makes me more weary of the eternal green trees and

meadows, round Sir Charles Trenton's gloomy mansion—all is in such dull order. There is nothing incomplete—no difficulties—no adventures to be hoped for, to vary the scene."

" You will have the house full of company, and no doubt will find amusement enough."

" Yes, we shall have the charming Mr. Lesley, and Cosway, and one or two others. You must positively find something to paint in the neighbourhood, Mr. Marston."

" I have an uncle who is now curate of Brookdale, the parish, I believe, in which Sir Charles Trenton's house is situated."

" Oh, delightful! and you will come down there, during the summer! That is a charming piece of information."

" Emily, my dear, Lady Trenton's carriage is at the door, to take us to the concert, so if Mr. Marston can spare you, you had better change your dress directly," cried the shrill voice of Lady Charlotte, at this instant.

"I am sorry to say the picture is so far advanced that I have no further excuse for troubling Miss Carrington," said Marston, arising, and laying aside his pencils. "With your ladyship's permission, I will send for it this afternoon, and finish it at my own house."

With a slight delay, and an agitation he could not entirely conceal, the artist then took his leave.

"You charming, naughty creature," said the mistress of the house, to her young companion, as soon as Marston had disappeared, "how could you fascinate that poor young man, so unmercifully. You forget that painters, like poets, are all fire and imagination. Love, with them, is a very serious matter."

"So much the better," answered the girl, laughing. "I should like to see some one seriously, desperately in love with me —so as to forget to admire their own little feet when they are making tender speeches, as Mr. Conway does; or to calculate a

girl's pretensions to fortune and fashion, as Mr. Lesley does, before he compromises his dignity by handing her down to her carriage. Oh, I should like a romantic lover of all things, were it only for the novelty and rarity of such an adventure."

"It might prove a very dangerous amusement," returned the knowing old lady ; but remember, I have warned you!"

They then left the room to prepare for the concert. Marston's mind was in a state of strange confusion when he quitted the house of Lady Charlotte. He admired Miss Carrington ; his imagination was excited by the charms of her person, and her bewitching manners ; and he fancied he was in love ; but he had still reason enough left to feel, that to think of her as a wife, was madness ; and there were moments when he suspected that this spoilt child of fortune, beautiful and fascinating as she was, was only a vain, helpless, useless fine lady, incapable of appreciating, or returning the earnest and passionate love

of a man of sincere and ardent nature, and equally incapable of being the sympathising wife, and help-mate of a man of lofty aims, and animated by the noble ambition of contributing to the social progress of his country.

“ We have started on the journey of life from such distant stations,” he thought, “ that we see all things in a different point of view; and yet, perchance, a true and devoted love might teach her the folly of much which dazzles her now, and render her capable of fulfilling nobly her duties as a wife and a mother—but not for me! not for the poor and humble painter, who has nothing to offer her in return for the sacrifice of all the cherished prejudices of her class. No! she is nothing more to me than a beautiful model, and to my art must my mind be devoted; for by a divided service can no success be won.”

And with this resolution, the painter again worked hard, and labour had its usual happy influence, in calming the agitation of his passions.

CHAPTER XI.

Work—work—work !

My labour never flags ;
And what are its wages ? a bed of straw—
A crust of bread and rags.

HOOD.

ABOUT a fortnight had elapsed after the departure of Miss Carrington and the Trentons from London, and Marston had, in a great measure again, become the master of his own passions and thoughts, or at least he believed so, when he passed, one evening, in the twilight, down the street where the house of the Baronet was situated. He hardly acknowledged to himself, that he

did so intentionally, and, truth to say, he felt drawn thither by one of those mysterious influences, which, whatever philosophers may assert to the contrary, sometimes direct our will, as by a magnetic power. A thousand agreeable remembrances of the happy hours he had passed in Miss Carrington's company thronged upon his mind as he advanced, and he involuntarily sighed deeply, when he thought that such a charming intercourse would, in all probability, never more be renewed. All his wise resolutions could not prevent him regretting the past.

It was getting dusk, yet he could see that the windows of the house were all closed; and its deserted and mournful appearance communicated a feeling of loneliness and desolation to his heart, such as he, with his vigorous and buoyant spirit, had never before experienced.

As he approached the door, there was still light enough for him to distinguish a neatly dressed young woman who came

out and descended the steps, whilst the porter stood looking after her for a minute or two before he re-closed the door.

She was a few paces in advance of Marston, but before they had proceeded above a hundred yards, she stopped, and putting a handkerchief to her face, turned as if to look into a stationer's window; but she saw nothing, she only endeavoured to conceal from the passers by, the tears she could not restrain.

Marston looked at her with curiosity and pity; and at that moment, she again turned to resume her way, and he saw her face distinctly in the gas-light.

It was changed; it was dimmed by tears and sorrow; and yet he knew it instantly.

“Kate D’Arcy,” he suddenly exclaimed holding out his hand towards her.

“Mr. Marston! can it be possible, and at such a moment as this,” she cried, her whole sad countenance suddenly lighting up with inexpressible joy. “Never more

will I despair of God's mercy!" and she seized his extended hand with both of hers, pressed it fervently, for an instant, and then, letting it fall, hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept afresh.

"Kate," he said "this is no place for giving way to such sorrow. Whatever has distressed you, try for a while to be calm—and I will accompany you home, if you have a home."

"Yes, you are right, Mr. Marston, I am foolish, very foolish!" she said, drying her tears. "I was not always so weak—but I am worn out—you must pardon me."

"You have often dried my tears, when I was a boy," said Marston, "it is my turn to comfort you now. So take my arm, Kate, and tell me which way we are to go."

"I must return to my father," answered the girl, simply.

"Then he is still alive?"

"Yes, he lives—" she said with a deep sigh, "but he is ill, very ill; I fear he wont know you. Oh, Mr. Marston, I have

gone through heavy trials, since I saw you last."

"If you have had need of assistance, why have you never informed my uncle that you were in difficulties."

"My father would not allow me," answered Kate, "they disagreed about some political point, and my father gave up going to Mr. Marston's before we left the neighbourhood. I thought it very strange of him to do so; but he could not bear contradiction, and I did not then understand all the extent of the calamity which threatened me. When we fell, afterwards, into the worst difficulties, your uncle had left the parish; and even had I ventured to write to him, I knew not his address."

"Where, then, are you living now?"

"In a court near Spital Fields. It is a terrible long way for you to go, Mr. Leonard."

"Take my arm, Kate, as I told you before," replied the artist, drawing the timid girl's hand through his arm, as he spoke,

“ no distance is too great for me to go, if I can help so old a friend as you are.”

“ You are very kind, sir.”

“ Don’t say sir to me, Kate. I have been so used to hear you call me Leonard, I don’t understand it.”

“ But we are both changed since then, Mr. Marston,” answered the girl, and then she remained silent for some time, as she walked along by the artist’s side. “ I hope you have been successful with your painting, Mr. Leonard,” she said, at length, timidly.

“ More so, in truth, than I deserve,” returned Marston, but we will talk of that at another time. We will get into an omnibus now, instead of walking all the way into the city.”

With this arrangement Kate readily complied, for she had much anxiety to return to her father as soon as possible; in less than half an hour, they had arrived at the weaver’s dwelling, in a small,

narrow court in the vicinity of Spital-fields. Kate led the way up the narrow, miserable stairs to the back room on the second floor. She paused a moment anxiously to listen what was passing within, before she opened the door.

“He was asleep when I left,” she whispered, “but I hear him astir now.”

“Is that his voice singing?” enquired Marston, regarding the girl with an indescribable feeling of affection and compassion; for her eyes filled with tears, as a feeble voice was audible from within, chanting, in a monotonous tone, a psalm-like melody. The words they heard were these :

Oh, Father, leave the rich and great
The joys of earth to prove ;
They need not change their prosperous state
To learn thy boundless love.

But take, in pity, first to rest,
The poor and toil-worn man,
For, unto him that life is best,
Which lasts the shortest span !

“ He has never sung a cheerful song since my mother died,” said the girl. “ But come in, Mr. Leonard, you will see him sadly changed.”

With a feeling of awe and respect, which suffering ever inspires in the heart of one who loves his fellow creatures with sincere and honest benevolence, Marston entered the little chamber.

James D’Arcy was sitting at the window, with his hands folded on his knees, and his large dark eyes fixed, with a look of half bewildered thought, on the little speck of sky, where a star was shining brightly between the dark chimneys of the opposite house.

He was indeed changed ; his black hair had become nearly grey ; his cheeks were sunken and deeply furrowed, and the bones of his ample forehead seemed almost to protrude from the thin transparent skin. His beard was only shorn, not shaved, for poor Kate had long performed this service with her scissars. He had an old black

cravat round his neck, and his clothes, though much patched, were scrupulously clean.

He looked round with alarm when they entered ; but though he stared vacantly at Marston, he smiled when his eyes fell upon Kate. It was a smile of ineffable confidence and love.

“ Dear Kate—God bless her,” he said; and then he began to murmur the same song once more, but, in so low a tone, that the words were inaudible. “ You must not leave me so long again, my child,” he then said, in a low, tender voice, “ for I am going away soon, where you will see me no more. Your mother is waiting for me.”

“ Has he been long in this state ?” enquired Marston, in a whisper, after he had stood for several minutes regarding the poor weaver with profound commiseration.

“ He has never been the same as formerly since he had the typhus fever ; but for the last six months, his mind has be-

come daily weaker. He is sometimes rational for hours together, and then a cloud appears to come over his faculties, and he is quite lost again. At first, he was often violent ; but now he is very gentle—but desponding and sad. No one but myself can know what I have suffered, Mr. Leonard," she added, almost inaudibly, and then she turned away to conceal her tears. "It is a terrible thing to watch the ruin of a mind—and such a mind as my poor father's. It was always above his station."

"I know it," said the artist ; "my uncle thought him a very remarkable man, who might have done great things, had his genius been properly cultivated."

"He often said he had many thoughts he could not tell my mother and me, for we should not understand them ; and sometimes, when he had no work, he got very irritable and restless. It was during one of these attacks, that he quarrelled with your uncle, and after that, he grew every

day worse. He had nobody to talk to, and his faculties seemed to destroy themselves. His imagination became over excited, and now, as if worn out, he is as you see him, for days together."

"And what have you done all this while, poor girl, under this very great affliction?" demanded Leonard, with deep interest.

"God has been kind, and given me more than my usual strength," she replied.

"But how have you tried to exist?" enquired the artist, and tears filled his eyes as they rested on the pale and care-worn features of the uncomplaining girl.

"When my father fell into this state, I could no longer leave him," she replied, "so I was obliged to give up working at a milliner's, and take to velvet weaving again, and with this, I was able, for some time, to earn nine-pence a day."

"And that was enough to maintain you both?"

"I made it do," answered Kate, simply

“I was certain, that if my father had known all, he would rather have died than have sought parish relief, and so I worked on. We sometimes had little enough to eat ; but you know, Mr. Leonard, I was used to that in old times.”

“This is terrible,” said the painter, and he shuddered when he remembered how, whilst Kate was thus suffering he had participated in scenes of luxurious extravagance ; and had yet murmured at his low estate; and felt it as a keen pain, when his pride was in the slightest degree wounded by men of wealth and station. Bitterly was he now conscious of the sin of discontent with his lot ; possessed as he was, with the means of earning sufficient for his wants; with a heart full of poetry, and a hand to give it expression, for he felt, as he listened to the poor girl’s simple confession, how many thousands of his fellow creatures daily had to endure the same, and even far greater deprivations than she had done.

"We were very badly off," pursued Kate, "when a great ball was given for the benefit of the silk weavers, and many of the fine ladies at the west end of the town, ordered dresses to be woven expressly for the occasion. I thought myself very lucky when I got one of the orders. As I was known to be a steady worker, I got the silk upon credit. It was considerably dearer than if I could have paid for it, but I knew not where to borrow the money. I hoped to get it back from the lady, for whom I wove the velvet, in three months at least; and as she had ordered it for charity, it was possible she might pay me immediately after she had received her dress. But, oh! Mr. Leonard, I had far better never have undertaken it, for it is six months since then, and I have never received a sixpence of the money, and if I cannot pay my debt to-morrow, the merchant threatens to keep back the payment of my work, and our landlord to seize our

little furniture, and my loom for rent. I know then, my father must starve, or go to the work-house, and that made me shed tears for the first time for many months."

"Indeed, it is a cruel thing, when a man like your father, who has worked hard all his youth," replied Leonard, "should be at all times so ill paid, that he and his family must live on short allowance, one half their lives, without having the means to save a farthing, to keep them from the parish in sickness and old age."

"Ah! Mr. Marston," returned the girl, "I never envied the rich their fine houses and carriages. They belong to them, and let them keep them. But it is hard, that in addition to their property, they should profit by the labour of the poor industrious man, and yet not pay him a just price for the employment of his whole life."

"Yes, Kate, it is hard," said the artist,

“ but luxury has created so many artificial wants, and the middle classes are so bent on imitating those above them, in all outward show, that to content their vanity, they must have everything cheap, and make large profits to support their costly modes of life.”

“ Oh! yes, that is very true,” replied Kate. “ The milliner where I worked, was paid more than double the value of her silks and ribons ; and yet, whilst she made a profit of twelve hundred a-year, we girls had to work day and night for a mere pittance. But she was the fashion, and she could flatter old and young, till I was often ashamed to hear her. The lady for whom I wove the velvet, was one of her best customers, and always paid her bills regularly.”

“ Do you remember her name ?” demanded Leonard.

“ Lady Trenton,” was the reply.

“ Lady Trenton ! can it be possible,”

exclaimed Marston ; and he started, as if he had received an electric shock.

“ Yes, that is her name; do you know her, Mr. Marston ?”

“ Yes,” answered Marston, “ and am astonished to hear that she has behaved so cruelly towards you. She is rich, and I had hitherto supposed her to be most amiable, and kind-hearted.”

“ I have never seen her but once,” answered Kate, “ her maid brought the order, and the footman told me he supposed Lady Trenton had forgotten me, for that all the other bills had been settled before she went out of town.”

“ It is very likely she forgot it altogether; she could not intentionally mean to defraud you, nor to expose you to embarrassment; but she lives in such a whirl of dissipation, that no doubt such trifles make slight impression on her mind.”

“ Ah, but it is no trifle to me,” answered the girl, with a deep sigh. “ If she knew

how I have suffered for the last month, even were she hard-hearted, she could not have allowed me to be turned unpaid from her door. But though the rich may sometimes hear of the sufferings of the poor, they do not feel them, Mr. Leonard—they do not understand them. But I must not weary you with my complaints. I am only one of a million, and perhaps better off than thousands who are forced to receive parish relief. I see the misery of such as we, and the idle, worthless lives of many of those who despise us because we are poor! There was scarcely a girl at the milliner's where I worked, that was not led into evil, by some of the idle fine gentlemen of the west end. It is a bad state of things, Mr. Leonard."

"Do many of the work-people think thus?" demanded Marston gravely.

"Far more than formerly," said the girl. "The more they see their earnings wasted by the upper classes, in vice and folly, the more discontented they become. There has

been a great change amongst them, lately. I have heard my father say, that when many of the masters lived in the city, there was a more friendly feeling between them and their people; but now, when they are greatly left to themselves, and worse paid than ever, they are not only discontented, but well nigh desperate."

"I have heard something of this," said Leonard, "yet when I asserted it, the politicians of the day, all laughed at my folly, and talked about commercial prosperity and national prosperity—and progress—and wealth."

"The workmen see the masters and everybody in the upper classes, living far finer every year than they did before; they read in the papers about the wonderful progress of society—and there they are, worse off in every way, than they were before, and then they make comparisons—and their minds get excited, and I sometimes fear it cannot end well. If there were to be a stagnation in the manu-

factories, even for a month, there are evil spirits afloat, which misery would soon concentrate."

"What is all that, you are talking about Kate?" enquired old D'Arcy, who had been for some time listening to his daughter, with an eager but perplexed gaze, as if his brain were too feeble fully to comprehend her. "And who is that you are talking to?"

"It is Mr. Leonard Marston, father," answered the girl, taking his hand in hers, "you have not forgotten him?"

"No—no, I knew him, when a boy—a fine boy," he replied, for his memory still remained as clear as ever. "His uncle treated me as if I were mad, but the boy is not to blame for that. I am glad to see you, Mr. Leonard, for I wanted to speak to a gentleman like you, about a plan I am going to lay before the Secretary of State for bettering the working man's condition. I shall want funds to put it in execution, and you can help me, sir. We are on the

eve of great changes, Mr. Leonard, and if Ministers won't listen to me, it will be worse for the nation. We workmen have been brooding and thinking—and suffering long, sir, but that cannot last for ever—and it won't last—”

“ You have been ill, D'Arcy, and you should try to think of something more cheerful. I am glad to find you have not forgotten me; for I have often thought of you and your kindness to me when I was a boy.”

“ Ah, we had better times, then; there was less riches—but less poverty. Some think French silks are our ruin—but that is only the narrow-minded old men who thought trade could not exist without protection, and who know more about the past than the present. No—no—Mr. Marston, that is only one of the bubbles that float on the surface of the deep; if we would find the true sources of poor men's troubles—”

“ And have you found them, D'Arcy?”

enquired the artist, deeply interested in the extraordinary thoughts of the old weaver's half-bewildered mind.

"I think I have," was the reply. "It has cost me many sleepless nights ; but if such thoughts bring a worthless being like me to the grave, what matter for that, provided they have added one grain to the future welfare of the poor and oppressed children of labour. We must first remember, Mr. Leonard, that it is no partial evil which is necessary to be taken into consideration ; but the mighty mass of general want and suffering which is driving millions to madness. I was a contented man once, but that day is past with me, and many others now; when we have seen our labourers the wonder and admiration of the world, and our employers taking the credit, and the honours, and the triumph, and the profit of our manufactures to themselves; and feasting, and dancing, and basking in the sunshine of prosperity; whilst we poor slaves, like the captives in a proces-

sion, create the splendour by which we gain nothing. It is the middle men who are eating us up, sir, as they have done the Irish poor. Workmen must make themselves independent of them by association, and that will be one step gained."

"But now I have found you and your daughter, D'Arcy," said the artist, "I trust I shall be able to assist you, and that you will soon regain your peace of mind."

"Oh, sir, my trouble is not for myself," answered the weaver. "One sufferer more or less matters little, and my opinion is, an industrious man ought to have no need of assistance, as long as he can work. I mean to tell the Secretary of State this, at once. It is time that these fine gentlemen in the government knew a little what such poor devils as we are thinking about. If the great won't help us, we must help ourselves. Some good men think the old coat only wants a little stretching to make

it fit comfortably ; but it won't do, sir. Man's knowledge has grown too large for it. We are freemen, and we know we are freemen, and it is not model lodging houses, nor baths, nor wash-houses, nor any such benevolent speculation, which will make us content without our rights. We must be represented. All our social antagonists are represented, and if they won't redress the evils they have themselves inflicted on us, we must try to get the means to do it ourselves. The workmen are a great power, sir. All the idle classes owe their living to them ; they could break up their whole vile credit system, by one month's rebellion ! Let the rich remember that ; for the time has come when the workmen are determined to have a just share of the profits of their own labour. Kate, dearest, you will be ready to go with me to the minister, to-morrow," he said, pressing the girl's hand in his; and then, sitting down in his accustomed place, he sunk into pro-

found thought, and was apparently unconscious of all visible objects.

“Does he often burst forth in this way?” murmured Leonard, anxiously regarding the poor man’s silent daughter.

“Oh, yes. I believe all his thoughts are about bettering the condition of the people. Oh, Mr. Leonard, I often think it would have been better both for him and for me, if he had never known your uncle. The books the curate sent him, and the conversations they had together, made him feel the trials of his humble state more bitterly, till his mind has got so excited since my mother’s death, that I sometimes fear he will never be calm and contented again. Whilst the education I received from the old gentleman—but no, no, I will not be so ungrateful, as to regret that!” she cried, with sudden emotion, “though it made my sufferings keener, it taught me better how to bear them.”

“Yes, dear Kate,” said the young man,

regarding the quiet, patient, noble simplicity of the young girl, with earnest admiration, a widely different admiration from that which was forced from him, by the charms of Miss Carrington, "do not reproach my uncle that he averted from you the curse of ignorance, the lowest of all degradation ; do not reproach him that he formed you to be the single guiding light of your father's noble mind, when the shadows of affliction have half obscured it. The real worth of human creatures, even on earth, Kate, is not to be rated by their possessions, but by their qualities, and their fulfillment of those duties which God assigns them. Be thankful for the well trained, gentle feelings, and clear, cultivated understanding, which have enabled you to be a guardian angel to the object of your filial love, under the heaviest calamity which can fall to the lot of man, to soothe his mental irritation by patient love, and to supply his wants by your frugal industry."

Kate made no answer. She bent down her head, and wept silent tears of mingled pain and pleasure. Often had the image of Leonard, and the remembrance of their childish days, passed across her mind, in the midst of the past years of sorrow and deprivation ; but it had only been to awaken regret ; and she had never hoped that the artist would retain the slightest affection for the poor weaver's daughter, or that she should ever hear words of praise pronounced by his lips. Poor girl ! her sole intimate communion had long been with God and her own heart, and words of human affection and approbation from one she loved so deeply, were almost more than she could bear.

“ But tell me,” said Leonard, after a brief pause, “ what may be the amount of Lady Trenton’s debt ? ”

“ Ten pounds,” replied Kate ; “ little to her but a fortune to us.”

“ Have no farther uneasiness on that point ; I know the lady well, and will,

with pleasure, advance you the money. I have, fortunately, sufficient with me to do so, now."

"No, no, Mr. Leonard—you are too good—too noble," returned the girl, at the same time, putting away the note which the artist offered.

"If not for yourself, for your father, you must accept it," he rejoined. "Call it a loan, if that pleases you best."

"Then as a loan, I take it," answered Kate. "You can never know, Mr. Leonard, the greatness of the obligation you confer."

The girl's voice trembled—she could not utter more.

Marston then arose.

"I must now leave you," he said; "but I will return in a day or two. We will then consider if anything can be done to relieve your father's malady, for I feel certain he is suffering as much from bodily as mental disease."

"Heaven bless you, Mr. Leonard," re-

turned the girl ; “ I will live in hope till you come back ; the sight of such a true and kind friend has revived the strength of my spirit, which was well nigh broken.”

Old D’Arcy got up, and saluted the artist civilly as he left the room ; but no sooner had the door closed upon him, than he came close up to his daughter, and said, with an anxious and troubled countenance,

“ Kate, who was that man ?”

“ Mr. Leonard Marston, whom you knew when a boy, my dear father. Don’t you remember him ?”

“ Don’t deceive me, Kate,” returned the weaver. “ Poor girl, how the fellow has imposed upon you. He is a spy—a spy sent by the Government. We are lost ! we shall both be sent to prison. Oh, the wretches, I understand all their intrigues. But they cannot know where the papers are hid, and they may kill me before I will tell. Poor Kate—poor Kate—what will you do when I am taken from you ?” he

murmured, in a low, dejected voice ; and then starting up, he continued, for several hours, to pace the room, lost in his troubled thoughts.

He remained in this excited state till a late hour of the night, and his daughter sat anxiously watching him, as she plied her shuttle; and trying, from time to time, by soothing words and gentle caresses, to dispel his illusions. But she felt no impatience under this painful task. Her love for her father was too great for her to repine at any toil, by which she could serve him ; and if, for one moment, she could recall a smile to his lips, or awaken a feeling of pleasure in his heart, she was amply repaid for long endeavours.

Alone with him in that solitary room, she was as unprotected in that populous house, as if they had been in a wilderness together. But she knew not that thoughts of self-destruction often flitted over the bewildered brain of poor D'Arcy; and for herself, she felt no terrors—so true is it,

that perfect love casteth out fear. Nor, indeed, had Kate ever been so unhappy, as might have been supposed, under such painful circumstances ; for high moral courage, and disinterested self-devotion, bring with them, when in full activity, a noble excitement, which exalts the soul above the sense of personal suffering. But that night, when she remembered the recent presence of Leonard Marston, and the words of kind encouragement he had spoken, a peaceful calm took possession of her heart, and the assurance that she and her father had now a friend, able and willing to assist them, removed a heavy load of care from her heart. Leonard was to her a superior being, whose remembrance, even when afar off, had stood like a guardian angel between her and despair ; and now, when she was again under his protection, she no longer regarded her existence, as an aimless monotony of sorrow.

On the following morning, Kate dis-

charged all her debts, and having procured her father a book, which for a time engaged his attention, she sat down to her loom with a more cheerful spirit, than she had known for many months.

But how often are such calms, on the troubled ocean of existence, the foregoers of the whirlwind and the tempest.

CHAPTER XII.

Thou soul of earth's best earthly mould,
Thou happy soul, and can it be
That this—
Is all that must remain of thee ?

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN the London season drew towards a close, the efforts of Marston, as a painter, had proved successful, in a pecuniary point of view, far beyond his most sanguine hopes. Nevertheless, the delusions of youthful enthusiasm had been considerably dispelled, and he had learnt the truth of many of his uncle's warnings.

He had been made to feel that he was admitted as an inferior, not received as a friend, or even an acquaintance, into the houses of the aristocracy ; and the more he knew of his brother artists, he was the less astonished at the barrier which had thus divided them, even from the highest professional classes.

Many sprung from the people, without genius, education, or manners ; possessed the mere technicalities of their art, and were manufacturers of pretty pictures, in order to earn a livelihood. Some endowed with higher talents were victims of inordinate vanity, which prevents all progress, and disgusts all patrons ; whilst many, with genius surpassing their powers of execution, irritated against themselves, and the society which neglected them, sought to forget their mortifications and disappointments, by plunging into the vilest debauchery. A certain set, perhaps of inferior genius, but more endowed with worldly talents, and witty and amusing in

society, sunk still lower, by becoming despised associates in the vices of the great, in order to exalt themselves ; imagining, that their fame and fortune was established when they could recount that they had dined with my Lord C——, or kept it up till three in the morning, with the Earl of H——.

Such men, whatever their facility in the management of colours, and the arrangement of a picture, are essentially vulgar ; and their works can never belong to the immortal creations of art. Leonard's experience soon convinced him that as long as an artist is regarded as a dependent on the aristocracy—a mere minion of their pleasures—and a contributor to their magnificence ; as long as genius confers less honour than wealth, no school of art, and no artist can arise in England, capable of influencing the spirit of the age, and exciting that influence to exalt and purify the national mind, by directing it to the contemplation of the beautiful, the

noble, and the true. He felt also, that as long as such artists and such art are wanting in England, the most successful achievements of her wealth and her industry² will soar no higher than to produce the most feeble and paltry imitations of the Dutch, Italian, or French, or German masters; or the more miserable originals of affected ignorance, who flatter themselves it is a proof of genius to do something that has never been done before, whether bad or good.

But Marston, whilst he listened to all the ridiculous theories of his associates, was convinced that it is in the simplicity of knowledge, and not of ignorance, where the highest beauty and the highest truth is to be found, and to attain this, he pursued his studies with indefatigable industry.

Towards the end of September his labours were unexpectedly interrupted by a letter from Sir Charles Trenton, inviting him to come down in a few days, on a visit to his country house, Easton Court. He

should be delighted, he added, if Mr. Marston could make it convenient to paint two pictures for his gallery, during his stay.

Of course Marston could have no hesitation in accepting an invitation, and an order given in so handsome a manner ; and it must be confessed, that the idea of again seeing Miss Carrington, and living for some weeks under the same roof with her, somewhat disturbed his studies during the remainder of the day.

But even with this brilliant prospect before him, the artist did not forget his promise of repeating his visit to the poor weaver. He found D'Arcy much in the same state as when he had last seen him, but he was struck by the alteration for the better in Kate's appearance. The expression of despair had passed from her beautiful features, and her whole countenance beamed with pleasure, as soon as Leonard entered the room.

She now recounted to him the complicated difficulties from which his loan had rescued

her, and yet she thanked him more by looks, than by words.

“ I am going to Sir Charles Trenton’s to-morrow,” he said, “ and I shall make no scruple of recalling your story to Lady Trenton’s mind. I cannot believe that she has so bad a heart, as wilfully to have neglected your claims. Should you have any need of farther aid, Kate, I will leave you my address. I shall probably visit my uncle before my return ; for Easton Court is not above a mile from his village.”

“ Easton Court !—what do you know about Easton Court ?” said D’Arcy, suddenly waking up from apparent sleep, and coming up with hurried steps towards them. “ Easton Court is in the parish of Brookdale. Kate, who is that strange man ? what does he know about such places ?”

“ It is young Mr. Marston, father,” answered the girl, softly.

“ Marston—Marston—ah ! Mr. Leonard Marston. It is very odd, sir,—often when

yon were a boy, I wondered who your father was. I once heard of a gentleman—but, no!—his name was not Marston either—it was a shameful business—I don't remember it clearly; for you must observe, Mr. Leonard, that my head is rather confused at times. I must get away from this place—for I can get no work—people all think I am mad. But they are quite mistaken—I am not mad; but ill—very ill, sir. I am wasting away like a candle, and when I die, poor Kate! what will she do?"

"But you will not die, father—you will not go, and leave me," said the poor girl, whilst tears filled her eyes. "We shall soon be well and happy, now Mr. Leonard has come to help you."

"Poor child, you hope, do you? God bless you!" said the old weaver, shaking his head, and regarding his daughter with a touching and mournful look of compassion, and then he turned from her, and walked to the window.

There was a profound silence for several minutes, interrupted only by the broken sobs of poor Kate. Leonard also was too much moved to speak.

“Did you ever hear your father allude to Brookdale before?” he enquired of the girl, at length, in a low voice.

“Never—except when my mother was dying,” she replied; “but I did not like to listen, for I believed there was some secret between them. Her last words were, ‘Never give your papers up, James, except to those who have been wronged—if you can find them.’ I never knew what she meant. My father was no more what he used to be, after my mother’s death; and often, when he has been thinking long and silently, he reproaches himself bitterly; but I cannot believe that he ever did anything very wrong. He is too good a man, Mr. Leonard.”

“Hush—hush, he is looking at us,” returned the painter, in a whisper.

“When is that man going away, Kate?”

enquired D'Arcy, after watching Leonard with sharp glances, for several minutes. "Don't believe him, if he tells you any stories. It is all a conspiracy. Do you hear me? Take care what you say to such people. Oh! Kate, Kate, I have ruined you, as well as myself, and I cannot mend it now—it is too late."

"What is too late, father?"

"Nothing! nothing!—ask no questions child. Don't you see that fellow—that spy is listening to us. I must go to the Secretary of State—he ought to care for the poor. It is very hard for them to be left to do everything for themselves, when they have no means, half paid as they are. Ah! if we were justly paid, we should be less tempted to do evil. When the rich commit so many sins, how can they wonder at us, if we are led astray by the tempter; who comes when we are starving, and those also are starving who are dearer to us than life. Poor Jane—poor wife! It is a sad world, Kate; but you will come to

me, before long, in a better, where much will be forgiven, or the rich would never get there."

"Let us be at peace with ourselves, father," answered the girl, taking his hand in hers. "We will be industrious, and envy no one their luxuries."

"They may keep all their luxuries ; I never envied them, for I don't see that they make them either better or happier ; but the labourer should be justly paid, not driven to work for starving prices. It gets worse every day ; I don't understand why, for every body seems to be finer, and richer, and idler, except we, who are stigmatized as the labouring classes. Capital carries off the profit, and robs labour of its due portion. I must find some way to mend this ; but my head is getting confused."

D'Arcy uttered all this in a sharp, eager voice, and then, covering his face with his hands, sunk into apparent unconsciousness.

Marston soon afterwards took his leave,

having promised Kate to visit her again, as soon as he returned to London.

All that week, old D'Arcy was restless and uneasy. He murmured often, half aloud, a few disjointed words, of which Kate understood but little ; but from that little she was led to suppose, that he was uneasy about certain papers, and thought his death was so rapidly approaching, that he would be unable to accomplish some project, which he reproached himself for having too long delayed. All this grieved her deeply. She could not think, for an instant, of the probability of her father's dying without the most acute agony. In spite of the difficulty she found in earning his support, even by the hardest labour ; in spite of the terrible sorrow she daily experienced in witnessing the gradually progressing ruin of his once noble mind, she clung to him with a love which his infirmities and entire dependence on herself, had rather increased than diminished. Young as she was, it appeared to her, that the future, without

her father, would be a blank to her, and her pure and beautiful love excluded every feeling of selfishness, or vanity, or worldly ambition, from her heart. It had long imparted to her a quiet strength, which suppressed all tears—but that evening she wept. She had not felt so heart-stricken, since Leonard Marston's return.

It was getting dark, and she had lighted a slender candle to pursue her work, whilst her father slumbered in his chair, when she was startled by a sharp rap at the door.

She arose to open it, but before she could do so, it was unclosed, and greatly to her astonishment, a tall, handsome man, with the dress and appearance of a man of fashion, stood upon the threshold.

He was not young, but still very handsome, and surveyed Kate with evident astonishment and admiration. He then glanced inquisitively round the poor apartment, before he replied to her enquiry, as to whom he sought, that he had been told,

that a man of the name of James D'Arcy lived there.

"He does," returned the girl, simply. "He is my father. Have you any commands for him?"

"I wish particularly to speak a few words with him in private, on a business of some importance," answered the stranger.

"May I inquire whom I have the honour of addressing?" asked Kate, with a slight feeling of anxiety, least any new misfortune awaited her father.

"Were I to tell you my name, it would be of little use," was the haughty reply, "my business is not with you; but, as I have already told you, with your father!"

"Speak softly, sir, I beg of you. My father is there asleep. I cannot have him disturbed, for his mind is in a troubled and excited state, and it is of great importance for him to be kept perfectly quiet. He is incapable of business."

"Very probable," returned the intruder, with the most callous indifference. "never-

theless, I must put a few questions to him. It is very often the case, that when old men lose some of their faculties, their memories of things long past remain clear and strong. I must positively ascertain, if this old man can give me the information I require or not. I cannot be troubled to come a second time to such a place as this."

As he ceased speaking, he took the candle in his hand, and turned towards the window, where old D'Arcy sat sleeping.

"For pity's sake, do not startle him out of his sleep, sir," said Kate, in a quick, eager whisper, "it is the first time he has slept so softly, for more than a month."

But the gentleman still advanced towards the poor weaver, without, in the slightest degree, heeding her entreaties.

"Sir—you shall not—the doctor said any surprise or agitation might upset his faculties for ever," persisted Kate, in a low imploring voice, as she laid her hand on

the stranger's arm, and endeavoured to hold him back. "For mercy's sake don't disturb him! it might kill him, sir, if you give him a sudden fright."

"No fear, my good girl," answered the stranger, in a clear, contemptuous tone. "He will be very glad to see me, I have no doubt of it. See he is awake already, and looking at us."

"Shame on you, sir," cried Kate, with a burst of honest indignation, "you can be no real gentleman, to intrude yourself on a poor man's privacy, in this unfeeling manner."

"Who is that you are talking to, Kate, at this time of night?" exclaimed D'Arcy, starting from his chair, and looking wildly at the unknown gentleman.

"Dear father, don't be frightened," answered the girl, gently taking his hand. "He is a stranger; but he can do us no harm."

"A stranger! what do strangers come here for? I want no strangers to come

watching me like spies, and then to go and tell everybody in the neighbourhood that I am mad. Send him away directly. And the fellow is dressed like a gentleman, too! It is such as he who can afford to mock a poor man's misery—but let him carry his charity elsewhere. I want none of his Bible reading; let him understand and obey it himself, before he thrusts it down the throats of the poor; I want none of his half-crowns, nor his sovereigns either. I am no beggar! sir,” he continued, regarding the unknown with a half bewildered expression of pride and indignation, “I have worked hard for a long life—and now I have my Kate to work for me! my pretty Kate, she will never leave her father to eat the bread of charity. My own dear Kate, don’t cry, I can’t bear it,” and the perplexed, and anxious look vanished from the old man’s eyes; and was followed by an expression of confiding love, as he gazed for a moment on his daughter, and then bent down

and kissed her forehead. "What brings you here at this time of night, sir, to distress my poor child in this way?" he demanded, suddenly looking up, and fixing a glance of fierce enquiry on the intruder.

There was a grandeur, and a deep pathos in the old man's futile indignation, to which even the hard man of the world, he addressed, could not be utterly insensible. But it was probably the remembrance of the business for which he came thither, and in which his own interest was deeply implicated, which caused him to assume a friendly and soothing manner towards poor D'Arcy, when he again addressed him.

"I have no evil intentions against you, nor your daughter," he said. "I should, in fact, be exceedingly sorry to distress you in any way. I should feel exceedingly obliged by your answering me certain questions of very great importance to me, concerning certain secrets connected with the early history of a gentleman, long

since dead ; that is the only reason why I am now here ?”

“ What should I know about your affairs ?” inquired the weaver, abruptly. “ I am only a poor workman, and have nothing to do with fine gentlemen like you. I never saw you in my life before.”

“ Perhaps not ; but I am certain you have frequently heard me spoken of. You cannot have forgotten Sir Charles Trenton.”

Kate was terrified by the sudden change of her father’s countenance, when he heard the name of his visitor. It expressed not only surprise and curiosity, but terror. As if to justify the Baronet’s assertion, that his mind was more likely to be clear and collected concerning subjects connected with the past than with the present, he quickly replied, with a sharp look of re-awakened intelligence—

“ And what does Sir Charles Trenton want with me ?”

“ Your father, Mr. D’Arcy, once lived

in the village of Brookdale," returned the baronet.

"Never," answered the weaver, sternly.

"Then your wife's father did, which amounts to the same thing."

"And if he did, what concern is that of yours?" demanded the old man, fiercely. "He was left to end his days in the work-house, when you and your rich wife were spending the rents of her estates in foreign parts; though, if every one had got their own, not a shilling of them would ever have come into your purse. There were some could have told fine tales, if they had only had the courage to speak the truth."

"Ah! then you remember something about this old man, it seems," answered Sir Charles, after watching the agitated countenance of the weaver, with a most searching and inquisitive eye. "You remember also, perhaps, the contents of a letter you wrote me, about three years ago?"

“I wrote you a letter ? I never wrote you, nor any other gentleman a letter, in the whole course of my life,” said the weaver, disdainfully. “I knew better. Why what do you pretend to say that I wrote to you about ?”

“About the secret, I have already alluded to.”

“It is clear you don’t know me, if you suppose so ! I would scorn to profit by another man’s crime, though I might be weak enough to be persuaded to conceal it.”

“You may deny it, as you please,” said the baronet, “but I tell you I received a letter, three years ago, signed J. D’Arcy. You cannot convince me that this is not your name ?”

“I never wrote to you ; I have said it; you may believe it or not, as you please ;” answered the old man doggedly.

“The letter was addressed to me, at Easton Court, during my absence in Italy ; but having all the appearance of a begging epistle, was thrown aside by my man of

business, and only reached me a few months ago, on my return from abroad. It spoke of poverty and suffering, and offered to give up certain papers, on the payment of a handsome sum of money. I sought for you immediately, but you had left the street from whence the letter was dated, and I have only recently been able to discover any trace of you."

"I tell you I never wrote to you, nor any one concerning papers, and not the proudest gentleman in England has ever yet dared to call me a liar to my face," returned D'Arcy with proud indignation.

"Here is the letter," said the baronet, unfolding a paper which he took from his pocket. "You will not surely persist in this denial, when I shew you your own signature," and he held it towards the weaver, pointing at the same time to the name of J. D'Arcy, at its conclusion.

The old man gazed anxiously at it, and then smiled sadly.

"Poor Jane," he said, "I always told

her not to write ; but she confessed on her death-bed that she had this once deceived me, when she thought I was dying of the typhus fever, and knew not where to turn for help. It was very wrong no doubt ; but by God's mercy no harm came of it, so I forgave her, and her spirit departed in peace, and no doubt she was forgiven in heaven ; for when a wife sees the husband she loves perishing for want of help and nourishment, and finds a way to end their troubles, even though that way be evil, the temptation, to a loving heart is very great. She repented sorely, and I forgave her.—Poor Jane. God have mercy on us both!"

" And you knew the history of these papers, then, it appears, as well as your wife ?" demanded Sir Charles, with the most eager anxiety to take advantage of the weaver's re-awakened recollection of the past.

" It would be well, if all married folks had as few secrets from one another, as Jane and I had," answered the old man.

“But the papers! I was speaking of certain family papers. Have you them still in your keeping?”

The weaver shook his head, but made no reply.

“Do you think he understands me?” inquired Sir Charles Trenton, turning to Kate, who, full of astonishment, had stood listening to this conversation, with the greatest anxiety on her father’s account. She saw that the sight of her mother’s hand-writing had excited him greatly, and the sad experience she had already had, of his malady, made her now more than ever dread the consequence of this melancholy recurrence to subjects which were exactly those the most likely to agitate his mind.

“Indeed, sir, it is all no use,” she therefore replied. “I never heard of my father’s having any papers of any description, and it is very wrong to torment him. It may be very dangerous.”

D’Arcy looked at his daughter, and the

baronet, as they spoke thus in a low voice together, and laughed bitterly.

“So you are trying what you can get out of that poor child,” he said sarcastically, “but she knows nothing, so you may as well spare yourself the trouble.”

“Then you do know something, I presume,” said Trenton. “Now, D’Arcy, let me speak to you like a reasonable man. If you have these papers, you will do wisely to profit by them, when you have an opportunity. After to-day I shall not trouble myself to make you any further offers, for after all, these documents are not of that vast importance you seem to imagine.”

“Yet you have taken a good deal of trouble to look after them, it appears,” rejoined the old man keenly.

“To come to the point,” continued Sir Charles, without noticing this interruption, “I promise you, on the honour of a gentleman, to pay you five hundred pounds down, when you deliver me the papers of which your wife speaks in this letter.”

“They are worth paying for, no doubt,” said the weaver, “can’t you offer a little more than that?”

“No doubt they are of more value to me than any one else,” answered Trenton, encouraged by this reply, “and to conclude this business, I promise you an annuity of fifty pounds a year for your own and your daughter’s life, from the moment I receive the documents, which your wife informed me, in her letter, were still in existence.”

“My wife, and all she loved, were arriving, when she wrote to you; two of her children, in former years, had perished of want before her eyes, and in a moment of weakness, she sought to avert the same fate from her husband, by confessing the secret of her father’s crime; but you are mistaken, sir, if you think that all poor men are to be bought. Your own sins, and love of money, no doubt, make you think that others, who are without gold, are capable of any degradation to obtain it.

But you are mistaken, sir. Thank God, there are very honest men amongst the poor. There are many hard-working labourers, whom no gold could tempt to crime, even in this great city of luxury, where the trials of poverty are redoubled by the insulting splendour, and the disdainful pride of wealth. Keep your money, sir, and I will keep my conscience. It is worth more to me."

"This is very annoying—very provoking," said Sir Charles, turning again to Kate. "It is evident your father has some remembrance of the business, which brought me hither, although his state of mind makes it impossible to reason with him, or to discuss this subject quietly. You are sure you never saw any papers in his possession, nor has he ever spoken to you on such a subject?"

"Never," replied Kate.

"You appear an intelligent girl," continued the Baronet. "In your father's present unsettled state of mind, he may,

perhaps, allude to this matter at some future time; and, if this occurs, you shall be handsomely remunerated, if you carefully remark any disclosures he may make, and report them faithfully to me. Such hints may direct me to further discoveries."

"It is worthy of the usurper of another man's rights and property, to suborn the child to become a spy on her own father," exclaimed the weaver, in a loud and indignant voice, as he started from his chair, and with a strength for which the Baronet was little prepared, he seized him by the shoulder, and whirled him towards the door.

"Go!" he cried, "contemptible and corrupt slave of selfishness and vice. Go, and shine amongst the worthless creatures whom gold and power have made as base and unscrupulous as yourself. Go, and treat all honest men who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, as if they were born only to be the abject slaves of your class, to work for your profit and pleasure,

and to think and act at your command. But learn, that there are those amongst us workmen, who know that they are God's creatures as well as you, who return your scorn with contempt, and laugh at the presumption of empty puppies who have nothing but their money and their pride to sustain their affected superiority over the strong-minded, strong-bodied labourers, who are battling daily with the world, and will battle, until their rights are won. But the whole system is rotten ! It is only those who are sitting in the light of prosperity: who are ignorant how the masses are progressing, who dwell beyond the glare of its corruption. But it won't last ! It cannot last ! The glittering images which mankind have long, in ignorance, adored, will be swept away, as by a whirlwind; and truth and justice will all hold equal rule over all. But when, Kate, when ? There is no perfection nor peace ever to be found on earth, whilst the passions of men exist ! It is in heaven only,

that they hold dominion, and thither, my child, we shall depart, before long."

"I beg of you, sir," said Kate, laying her hand on Sir Charles's arm, "I do implore you, sir, to say no more to my father, but leave him. You will learn nothing, for he is lost now to all passing things; and cannot understand your questions."

"I will see you again," answered the Baronet, endeavouring to slip a guinea into Kate's hand; and regarding her with the most audacious admiration.

"Keep your money," she said, pushing back the gold; and she opened the door, with all haste, for the great man to depart.

Sir Charles laughed, as if he thought she would not always be such a fool; and telling her he should return in a week, left the room. Kate eagerly closed and locked the door, as soon as he was gone. Her experience at the milliner's had taught her to have a horror of these handsome men of pleasure — educated gentlemen they

call one another—though in what their education consists, it would be a very difficult matter to discover; certainly not in observing the ten commandments.

CHAPTER XIV.

What equal torment to the grieve of mind
And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart.
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkinde;
And nourisheth her own consuming smart.

SPENSER.

OLD D'Arcy did not observe what his daughter had done, when she locked Sir Charles Trenton out of the room. When she returned to her work in silence, the bewildered and excited expression of his countenance greatly alarmed her, and before long, he arose and began to walk up and down the room, with long and hurried strides.

“Kate,” he said, “come here, my child, and attend to what I am going to say to you. It is a bad, hard world, and the one half of its inhabitants is always trying to deceive the other half. But you love me, Kate—my own dear child ! you don’t deceive me. If I thought you could, I should go mad. It would break my heart—and yet, perhaps, I had better die ; for I am a sad burthen to you, Kate, I know it sometimes.”

“Don’t say so, dearest father,” answered the girl, whilst tears flowed down her cheeks. I love nothing on earth, as I love you.”

“God bless you, my child, say that again,” returned the weaver, with a look of love, such as no language can express.

“Yes, dearest father, I love you very dearly,” murmured the girl, and she kissed his withered hand.

“I believe you, darling!” he said, “and your love is all I have left now. Kate you will never leave me?”

“Never, father,” she returned, and tears prevented her adding more.

“Then I will lie down and sleep now, for you have made me very happy—happier than I have been for long.”

D’Arcy then took a light, and, after kissing and blessing his daughter, went into the adjoining little room, where his bed stood. When the girl went in for his candle, about half an hour afterwards, he was sleeping ; but his sleep was evidently disturbed by troubled dreams, and as she bent anxiously over him, she heard him murmur her mother’s name.

Though Kate’s curiosity and wonder had been strongly excited by the visit of Sir Charles Trenton, she was too much fatigued by the labours of the day, and many nights of broken rest, to think long even of this strange occurrence ; but quickly lay down, on her own little bed, still partly dressed, which had become her habit since her father’s illness. In five minutes she slept soundly.

The early sun had not yet arisen, when Kate was suddenly disturbed by some one stirring close beside her, and when she looked up, still scarcely conscious where she was, the first object she beheld, was her father, completely dressed, bending over her, with an anxious and troubled look.

"Get up, my girl," he said, in a whisper, "we must be off from this place as soon as possible, without that man, or anybody else seeing us. I have long thought it must come to this, and now there is no time to be lost."

"Where are we to go, father?" enquired the girl, with wonderful composure, for it had long been her wont to humour the old man when in these excited moods, and she was not alarmed by them.

"Don't ask me now," he answered, somewhat impatiently. "Did I not tell you there was no time to lose, or that man might be before us. If you don't get ready quickly, I must go without you."

“ You won’t leave me, father!—you cannot leave me,” she said, whilst a new terror thrilled through her heart. “ Where you go, I go likewise; you know I have nobody but you, father, in the wide world.”

“ It is a weary world, Kate,” said the weaver, with a deep sigh. “ There are many misdeeds done in it the law never punishes—and I know one—and I have been a cowardly rascal—and I have sinned, Kate—greatly sinned.”

“ Oh, no! I can never believe you have done any wrong intentionally,” was the girl’s reply.

“ God bless you, for saying so, my child,” cried the old man. “ I am not quite clear about it, Kate; but there has been great injustice somewhere, and I was over cautious, for your mother’s sake, and I never told what I knew.”

“ It is all past, and you must try to forget it.”

“ I cannot forget. I ought not to forget

it, and I won't be tempted further by that bad mam," persisted D'Arcy. "It is all part of a conspiracy, by which he is trying to bring me to the gallows. He will tell every body what I did, and then we shall be both ruined; my poor child, you will curse the parent who has dishonoured you."

"No, no, father," said the girl, who had now arisen, "I shall always love you, happen what may; so think no more about the strange man, and help me to turn up my bed, and get breakfast ready."

"Kate, I tell you, we must get away without loss of time," returned D'Arcy, quietly. "Don't talk any more; but put on your bonnet, and come at once."

Kate, dreading what was to follow, contrived to conceal her father's hat, whilst putting on her own shawl; but she gained nothing by this little stratagem. He became very angry when it was not to be found, and declared that he was persecuted by thieves, who stole everything he valued;

but it was no matter, he would go without it. The poor girl, fearful of opposing him further, then produced it. With a feeling of inexpressible apprehension, she saw him, with trembling hands, unlock the chamber door ; but she did not lose her presence of mind, and passing her arm through his, glided down the stairs at his side, without his appearing conscious of her presence.

Not a creature, save themselves, was astir in the house, and only a dim light penetrated through the dirty windows of the staircase, down which the poor weaver groped his way. Kate made no further attempt to detain him. She knew that the strength of his will, no longer under the control of his reasoning faculties, was too strong to be resisted, yet though she looked quietly on, as with eager feebleness he unbarred the house door, she still hoped that his fancy might suddenly take another direction, or that some unexpected interruption might occur to detain them.

It was only when the house door was again closed behind them, and they stood alone in the street, with a drizzling rain falling on them, and increasing the mournful obscurity of the morning twilight, that she felt, with despair, the danger of her position, and her own utter helplessness. She looked at her father ; his wild and wandering eyes had an expression of strong and eager desire, which increased her dread, and, for the first time, the horrible idea flashed upon her mind, that he was intent on suicide !

She felt that Leonard Marston was the only being upon earth, who could have assisted her at this terrible moment. Her father looked at her, and saw that she was weeping bitterly.

“ Kate—Kate !” he said, chidingly, “ this is too much—Let me go quietly—I must go, and you only pain me by your tears.”

“ Father, where do you want to go?—

You do not surely wish to leave your own poor child, alone in the wide world?"

"Kate, I tell you, this is too much. I cannot bear it," answered the old man, looking mournfully at his daughter, who now, instead of supporting him, hung imploringly to his arm.

"But let us wait till daylight, father," she said.

"There is no time to lose," was the reply.

"But where must we go? there is no one astir but ourselves, and the rain is falling very fast. Don't you feel it, father?"

But the old man felt it not.

"Come on, Kate," he said, "we must get to the church, before that man reaches it. Such as he, sleep late, so we shall have the start of him."

The girl looked around her for help; but there was none. The tall houses stood around her like monuments, ghastly

and still; not a sound of living creature disturbed their solemn gloom. A dim star still gleamed through a rent in the cold grey clouds, so mournfully, that even the aspect of heaven made her feel more desolate and forlorn. As they advanced, a feeble light appeared at a high window at the far end of the street, as if some workman was arising to commence thus early his long task of daily toil—but still not a human being was to be seen.

The agony in Kate's heart was so great that she was incapable of thought, and she walked on, clinging to poor D'Arcy's arm, without questioning him further. When she afterwards looked back to that terrible hour, she remembered nothing, but the grey, cheerless sky, and her father's mournful countenance. Of herself, and of her own feelings, she knew nothing, but the fear which had distracted her, of losing him for ever.

Day came, and the weaver and his daughter still wandered on; and when

they had left London far behind them, and they had passed many deep streams and lonely ponds, Kate's dread, that her father was bent on self-destruction, began to subside. The rain ceased, a light breeze wafted the clouds away, and the sun shone upon them as they pursued their way along a high road, about ten miles to the north of the great Metropolis. It was then past noon, and the strength of the poor weaver had evidently, for some time, begun to fail. The excitement which had so long supported him, had not subsided ; but he was exhausted by fatigue and want of food, and his thoughts took another direction. He remembered his child.

“ Kate,” he said, “ you must be weary and hungry ; why have you never told me ? Poor Kate, you never complain ; but I am very cruel. Yet, you ought to speak plainly—I forget. My head is not quite right, I believe. I forget. But I don’t mean to be unkind, my poor child.”

“ No, no ; I know you love me too well,”

answered the girl, delighted by the return of calm intelligence.

“We must find some place where we can get food and rest,” continued the old man, “for it would be impossible for us to reach our journey’s end without.”

“Have we far to go yet, father?” enquired Kate, eagerly.

“Yes—we have a long way to walk.”

“Where are we going to? I should like to know,” said Kate.

“Have I not told you?” answered the weaver. “To your mother’s birth-place.”

“That is more than a hundred miles distant—we can never reach it on foot! and why should we go so far?”

“I know why,” answered D’Arcy, “and that is enough. Oh, I have been a weak fool, to keep silence so long about this affair; for I was quite sure there must be some great wrong done, and all I can do now, is to try to make amends for my folly before I die. Poverty made me a coward; your poor mother’s prayers made me a

coward ; but she is gone, and I am past caring for this world, and its trials now ; only my Kate—my poor Kate, what will become of you !” and he bent down and hid his face in his hands. He tried to think. But his brain, weakened by long disease, was like a feeble hand, which endeavours, but is too weak, to grasp an object near ; his thoughts were like shadows, incomplete and complexing ; only one was distinct, amidst the confusion, and that was, that his journey must be accomplished before he died.

Kate saw a little public house, at no great distance from them, by the side of the road, and thither she led her father. Food was there set before them, and after the old man had partaken of it, he sunk into a state of stupor, resembling sleep, and forgot, for a time, the engrossing idea which had induced him to wander so far from home. Night came, and to Kate’s unspeakable satisfaction, he went to bed without opposition ; she had no resting

place, but a mattrass laid down at his door ; and often did she arise in the night to ascertain if he still slept.

During the first hours of the night she never heard him move, and she too slept, though her sleep was broken, as it had been for many nights, by anxiety. But the strength of her devoted affection made service for her father light to her. She took no account of it. Her only desire was, if possible, to alleviate his sufferings.

The traveller arose with the sun ; but though the weaver's mind was much calmer than on the previous day, his remembrance of Sir Charles Trenton's visit, and the papers he wished to obtain, had distinctly returned, and he was as anxious as ever to continue his journey.

The landlord of the house where they had passed the night, was a kind-hearted man, and, having learnt from Kate whither they were going, he advised her, by no means, to continue their way on foot. It was plain, he said, her father was not equal

to it. The railroad, which passed within a mile of the house, would take them, in five hours, to a station only three miles from the place they wanted to go to. It was only seven o'clock now, and if they would wait till ten, he would go down with them, and see them safe off by a train, which would pass at that hour.

Kate hesitated, till she had ascertained what the expense was likely to be, and had counted the contents of her purse. Thanks to Leonard Marston's generosity, she had more than was necessary, and she therefore decided to follow the landlord's advice. Her father, with that strange variability which characterised his state of mind, seemed to understand the advantages of this arrangement, when she explained it to him, and readily accompanied her to the railroad.

When seated in one of the carriages, he more than once expressed his exultation at being whirled so rapidly along, and poor Kate felt, for a time, as if she had

been rescued from an abyss of despair, wisely endeavouring not to anticipate the trials which might await her at the end of that day's journey.

When the girl stood alone with her old father, in the bright morning sun, at the end of the road leading to the little village, which had been her mother's birth-place, and the hum of the rushing steam carriages became fainter and fainter, as they whirled rapidly away, she felt, for a few minutes, even more desolate and deserted than when she had first left her home. But she had strength of mind sufficient to chide herself for the feeling ; she remembered how wonderfully she had been led on through all her troubles and trials as by an invisible though a sustaining power, and ennobled by the consciousness that she was her father's sole guide and support, and was fulfilling, with her utmost strength, her duty towards him, she brushed away her tears, and told poor D'Arcy to be of

good cheer, for they would be at the end of their journey in less than an hour.

But even this hope was destined to be disappointed. The rain began suddenly to pour down in torrents, before they had proceeded above a mile ; and Kate soon found that her father, exhausted by previous fatigue, was quite unable to walk under such circumstances, as far as the village. With difficulty she got along the muddy road, about half a mile further ; and as she had still some money left, she determined to ask for a night's lodging at a house by the road-side.

It was a poor place ; one of those old brick cottages, which may still be seen in some parts of England, where small farms have not been entirely done away with. Yet it was out of repair, as if the landlord took little heed of his tenant's comforts.

A middle-aged woman opened the door, and when she heard the girl's petition, looked at her and her father with a sus-

picious eye, before she replied. When, however, Kate added that she was willing to pay whatever she demanded, for her father was unable to get further that night, she asked them to walk in, and rest themselves by the fire awhile, till her husband came from the fields, when he would be able to say if they had a bed to spare.

Most gladly did the poor wanderers accept this offer, though made in a somewhat sullen manner. The farmer came in before long, and his wife took him quietly aside, to explain the presence of the unknown guests at the fire-side. Farmer Robson, apparently of a less suspicious character than his wife, told her at once to send the lads to spread some hay for them in the loft. He then turned, and after looking at old D'Arcy inquisitively for a minute, shook him heartily by the hand, and said he was glad to find him and his daughter there, for it was not a night for either old or young to be

abroad. Kate thanked him, and glancing at her father, said he was rather unsettled, and was very anxious to get to the village. The farmer understood her at once.

“Poor man,” he said, “wife shall make you both a warm cup of tea, and you must be content to stay here till to-morrow.”

The weaver seemed to understand that this delay was inevitable, for after going once or twice to the door, and looking out at the rain, he muttered something about a church—and getting the papers in the morning ; and then sat down and spread out his damp, cold, feeble hands, before the fire. Once he murmured—“Too late—too late,” in those sad, desponding accents, which ever seemed to pierce Kate’s heart, and then he spoke no more. He took the food his daughter offered him, he lay down on the rough bed provided for him in the loft, and then after long silently watching her, as she sat near him, he sunk into a quiet sleep.

Kate felt, as those eyes, full of love and

compassion, rested upon her, that no language could interpret that expression, nor reveal the mysteries of the half-bewildered mind, to which it was possible the secrets of a higher existence were already partly unveiled ; and a holy awe crept over her, as she sat in that desolate garret, in the feeble light of a rushlight, watching the old man's sleep.

Much did she then think of the past, and of the future, and of the wonderful secrets of spiritual life, which can never become clear to us, on this side the grave.

Though, perhaps, upon earth, there is no greater trial for a feeling heart, than to watch the ruin of a beloved and noble mind, above all, when aggravated by the deprivations of poverty, the poor girl found some consolation in the recollection of the subjects by which her father's thoughts were occupied. In a state such as his, when the inmost secrets of the soul are unconsciously betrayed, no word had ever escaped his lips, save what was pure and

benevolent. The wandering of his disturbed faculties, showing that his mind had ever been, and was still, actively employed, even in disease, in plans and wishes for the welfare and improvement of his fellow-creatures.

Kate at length lay down on a bed of hay, at the further end of the loft. With humble prayers, she soothed her soul to rest, till half believing, half dreaming that her mother's spirit hovered over her, and murmured words of consolation and hope, she fell asleep.

END OF VOL. I.



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